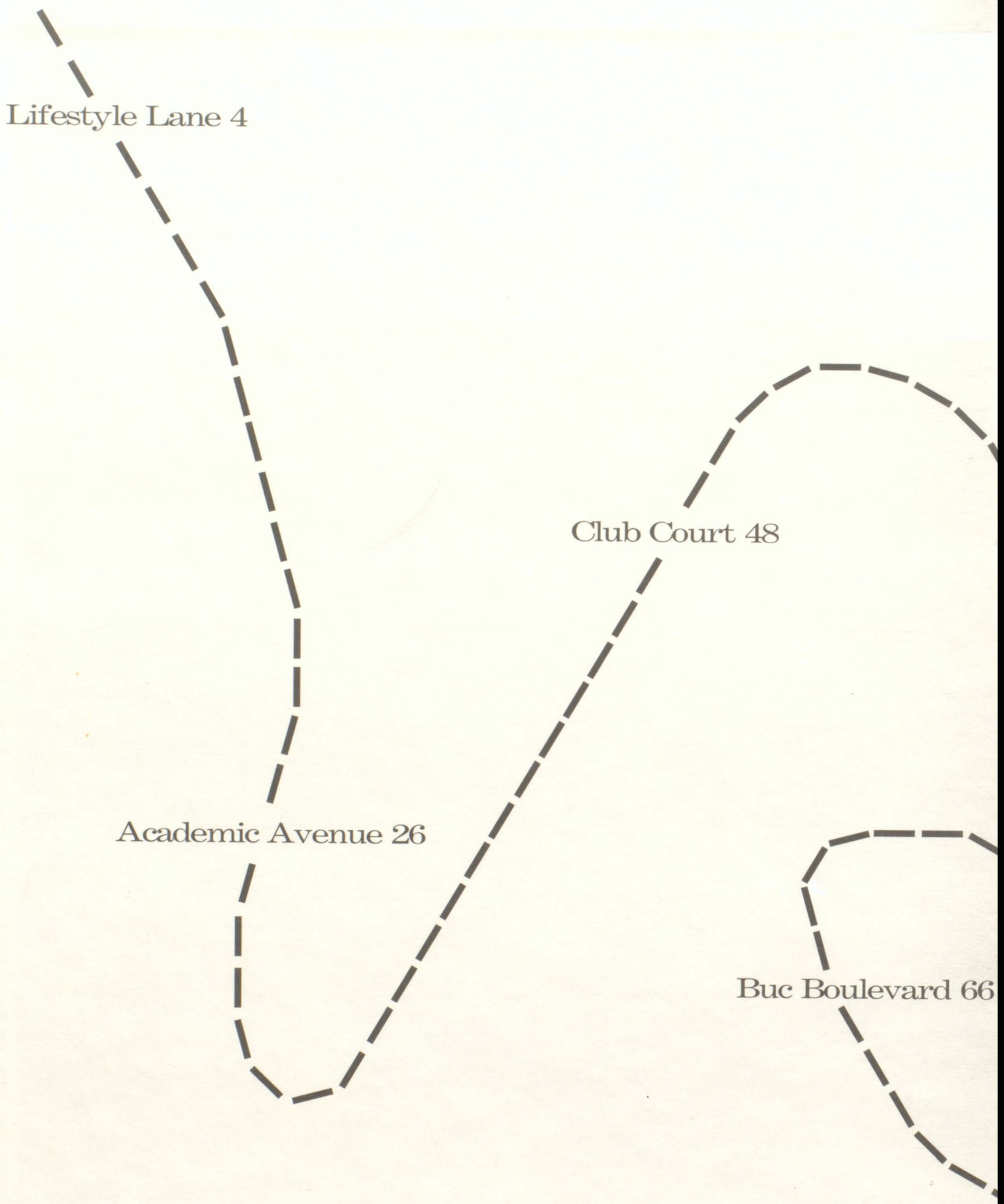
JOURNEY

MERRILLVUE 2015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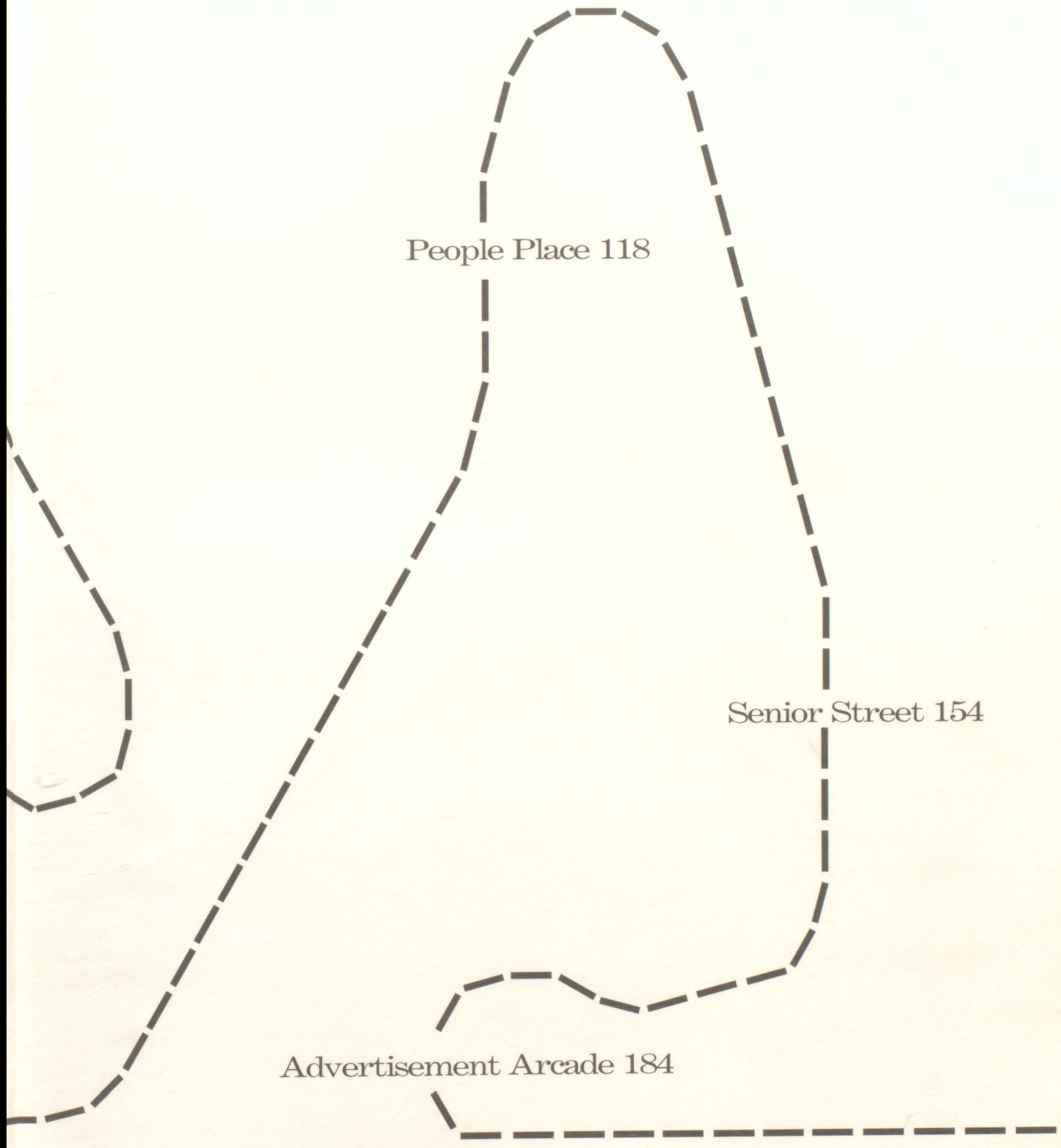
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JOURNEY

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Sgt. Dan Wrasman

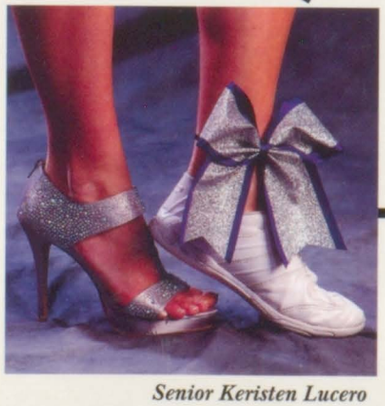
Junior Ashton Anekwe

Senior Camille Ochoa

Junior Ashley Mendez

Senior Mikkel Drevland

Senior Cassidy Koontz



Senior Keristen Lucero

Every *journey* begins with a single step

That single step, that first step off the bus a freshman takes with adrenaline and excitement running through his or her veins.

That single step, that first step into the main building that a sophomore takes with a feeling of relief that he or she is not a freshman anymore.

That single step, that first step onto the parking lot pavement that a junior eagerly takes to finish the year to become a senior.

That single step, that first step through the gymnasium doors that a senior takes for the first senior meeting of the year with eyes on the finish line.

Following those first steps are second steps along a path full of experiences and memories, all captured in pictures and videos posted on Snapchat and Instagram. Technology provides access to national and international news, and the world watches.

Detours and crossroads offer endless opportunity for growth. Even with GPS, individuals still get lost. Finding a new way offers hope for the future. Personal paths intertwine with others' paths, sometimes only for short periods of time and sometimes longer. Friendships, relationships and special moments result.

Racing to the end consumes a life, especially high school life. Students spend a lot of the time racing to the end and often forget that what really matters is the walk, one foot in front of the other. The journey is what is important.

Sophomore Markeya McDowell

Seniors Ashli McNair, Keristen Lucero, Kayla Grant, Cassidy Koontz, Arriana Jimenez

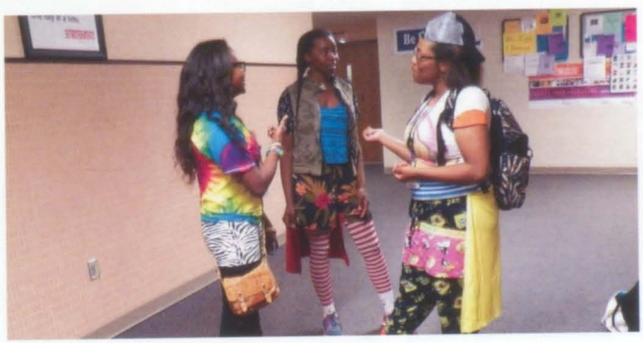
Mrs. Melissa Sickinger

Senior Brandon Taylor, Junior Brian Barron, Senior Gregory Vega Jr.

Lifestyle Lane

Music, turntables put Padilla in control

Mr. Michael Engle



Seniors Khandi King, Brianna Cole and Junior Patrice Jenkins

Senior Juan Padilla

Music, turntable and controller in hand, Senior Juan Padilla enters a party ready to entertain. The 18-year-old and parties go hand in hand.

"I like younger audiences better because they have more energy and they are just more fun to be around and they are easier to read," Padilla said.

At the age of 13, Padilla's uncle taught him the basics and his family has been encouraging him ever since.

"My stepmom invested in my equipment to help me get started. My family is a big influence to me and what I do," Padilla said.

Padilla is a disc jockey part-time but would like to be full-time. He likes music and thinks it is funny to see the reaction of the audiences.

"I like to play a lot of EDM (electronic dance music) because it has a nice beat to it and people can really dance to it," Padilla said.

Padilla said he likes to play different types of music at the gigs. Some people like to give him different playlists for their parties.

"Right now I usually only get one gig a week, but sometimes I get two gigs," Padilla said.

Padilla advertises his services using business cards, a Facebook page and a Soundcloud account. He also works at Navy Pier.

His next gig is at Columbia College of Chicago to major in audio production.

"When I go to school," Padilla said, "I would like to work for the school's radio station to get the feel of how it would be careerwise."

"I got this because I'm a singer and music is my love and my passion. It's how I express myself. Music means a lot to me."

Junior Rashawn Mills

"It's my grandpa and I fishing. He used to take me fishing before he died."

Senior Justus Collins

"I got the feather pen because I write poetry. I got the word ambition because my mom always says I always strive to get what I want and I'm extremely ambitious."

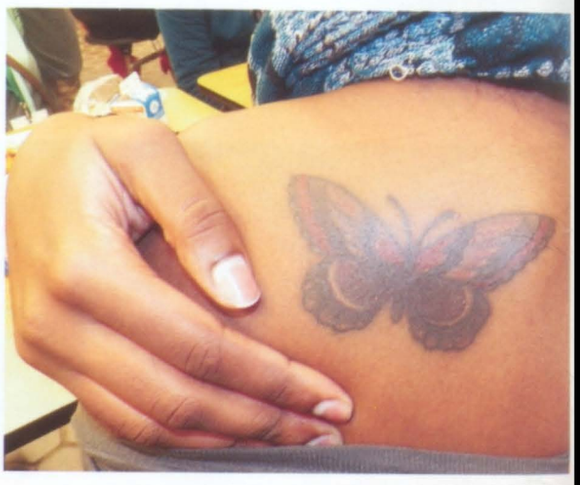
Senior Rachel Galante

"I got this tattoo because the words mean something to me and my grandma's name is in the middle. It's a memory."

Junior Amber Drake

"Its a butterfly and it matches my mom's. It was a birthday gift. I love my mom."

Senior Victoria Gaines

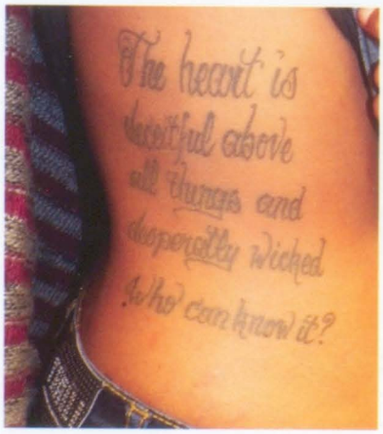


"I've always wanted to get a tattoo. This tattoo is lyrics to a song by my favorite band, All Time Low, and the words keeps me humble."

Junior Hope Krajnak

"I got this to show my dedication to the Lord. It reminds me that no matter where I am in life, I know who I belong to. This tattoo means you cannot trust your own heart and only God knows your truest intentions."

Junior Ashton Anekwe



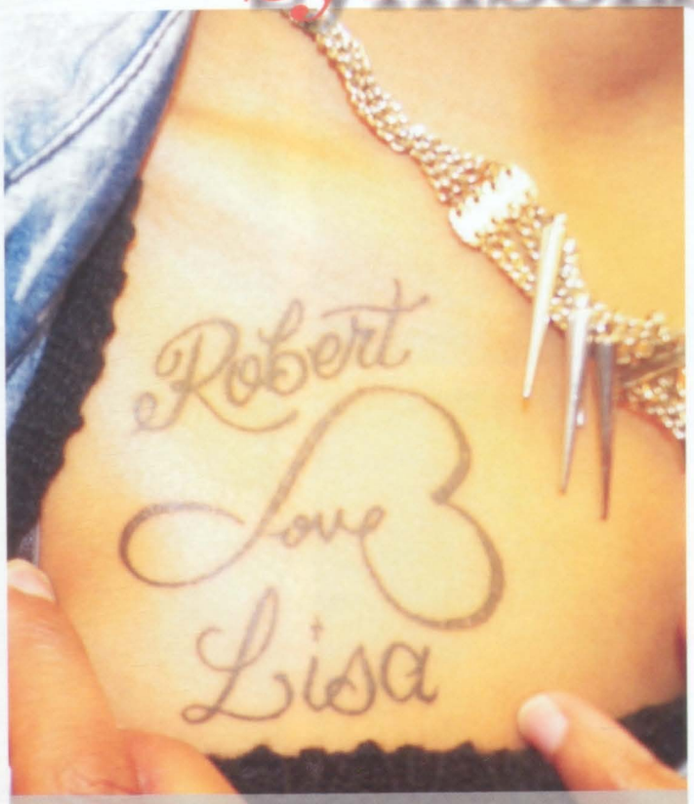
"I got this because I originally had seen the Bible verse (Psalms 46:5) and it decribes me, my personality and my faith in God. He's not going to let me fall."

Senior Chareese Parker

I got it because it relates to life and it means a lot to me, through sports and academics."

Sophomore Andrew Vander Woude

Inked in symbolism in tattoos



"My dad died before I was born and my mom was taking care of me since I was five. It's one my way to show my love for them."

Senior Robin Townsend

For centuries and in many cultures, tattoos have allowed people to express their individuality. They can be colorful or colorless, elaborate designs or simple words.

Students have embraced this trend. Some think tattoos are cool. Others endure the process because the tattoo has a certain meaning.

"The tattoo I got is important because it is a form of art. Art is a part of me and reflects how I feel about art on the inside," Senior Kianna Reed said.

Reed said her tattoo expresses how she felt about the subject of art and that having a form of art on her body would be really cool to have.

Some tattoos can express religious beliefs or any other beliefs that a student may have.

"The second tattoo I got was of a frog. I got it because my mom believes in Buddhism and believes that she will become one when she is reincarnated," Junior Koreena Ramos said.

Both students said that they were happy to get a tattoo, but they still had to go through the long process of getting one.

"Getting my tattoo was really boring. I got the coloring done when I got my tattoo done, so I had to sit around for a couple of hours," Reed said.

Along with a long wait, getting a tattoo may be uncomfortable for some.

"My first tattoo I got was on my hip bone and it really hurt," Ramos said. "I thought the second wouldn't hurt as much, but it hurt even more than the first."

Love inked for infinity

During the month of love in 2013, English teacher Mr. David Hossler and his fiancée, Danielle, decided to get their first tattoo together.

"We were both a little nervous and I don't like needles," Mr. Hossler said. "But it was quick and only took three minutes."

They did not physically have engagement rings, but they knew they were getting wedding bands. The couple decided their first tattoo would be an infinity sign with a diamond on top to represent their engagement ring.

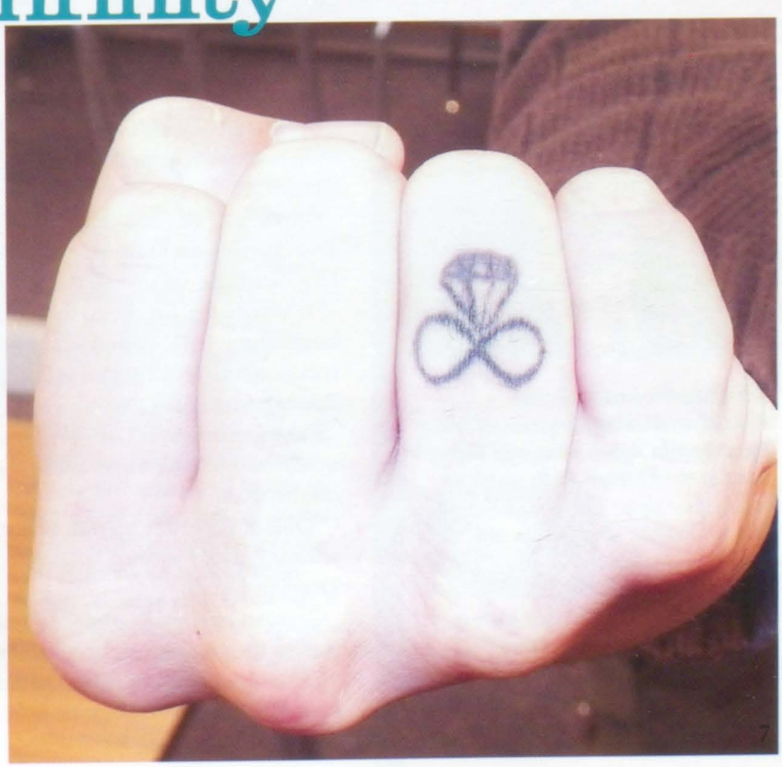
"It started off as a joke, but as time went by, we decided, 'Why not?'" Mr. Hossler said. "Neither one of us was married before or got a tattoo before."

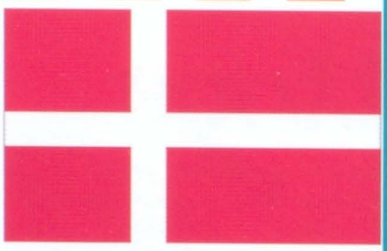
After getting the tattoos, the couple decided to send their wedding announcements with a picture of their new tattoo.

"A lot of people thought it was a good idea," Mr. Hossler said. "We got a lot of compliments on it."

The couple dated for two years before becoming engaged for nine months. They were married April 5, 2013.

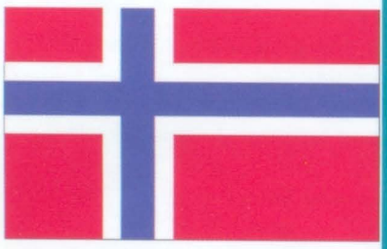
"Marriage is supposed to be forever," Mr. Hossler said, "and a tattoo is supposed to be forever."





Denmark

Germany



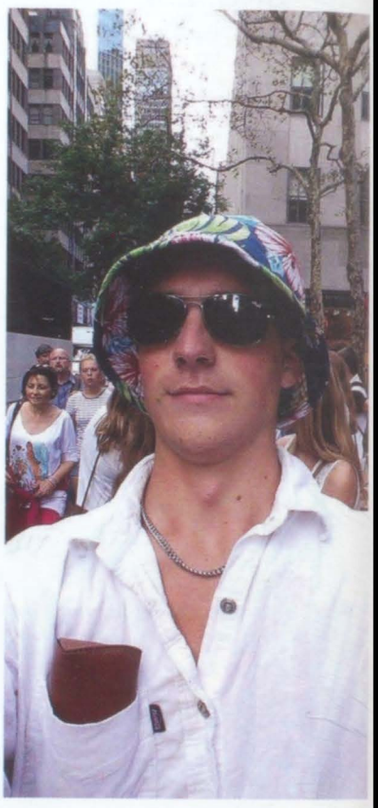
Norway

Switzerland

Skiing in Zermatt, Switzerland, Leon Kallert flies through the sky. "It was an awesome experience to ski in one of the top skiing resorts in the world," Kallert said.

Standing on the Manhattan Bridge, Celine Balmer tours the city of New York with a group of exchange students. "Visiting New York was really cool. This was my first time in a really big city," Balmer said. She described her trip as an unforgettable, loving experience.

In Maine, Leon Kallert visits with his best friend from Switzerland, Dario Arnet, who is also an exchange student in the United States. "I went for a week. It was funny. I met his friends, and we did a lot," Kallert said.



Surrounded by a crowd of people, Mikkel Drevland snaps a quick photo while exploring New York City. "Although I didn't enjoy that there were so many people, it was a fun experience," Drevland said. He said that he spent the trip doing lots of shopping and walking the streets of New York City.

Exchange students get involved with sports, clubs

Attending his first National Basketball Association game, Mikolaj Kaszubowski stands alongside the court as the Chicago Bulls warm up before their game against the Atlanta Hawks. "It has always been my dream to go to an NBA game," Kaszubowski said. He described the game as extremely fun and exciting. "Everyone at the game was very hyped, and the crowd was fantastic," Kaszubowski said.

The exchange students took advantage of being able to experience extra-curriculars and make friends.

Polish exchange student Mikolaj Kaszubowski and Norwegian exchange student Mikkel Drevland played on the soccer team in the fall.

"It was easier for me to make friends in the beginning of the school year because I joined the soccer team, and I met a lot of great guys," Kaszubowski said.

Kaszubowski and Drevland said that they had many memorable experiences because they were on the team.

"One of my most memorable experiences was winning the Hoosier Cup down at Bloomington," Drevland said.

German exchange student Henry Holzwarth joined the track team because he ran in Stuttgart.

"The track team here works really hard. My school doesn't have a track team. There aren't as many boys who do track outside from school back home," Holzwarth said.

Aside from sports, Tunisian exchange student Rahma Safraoui was one who immersed herself into the clubs. Safraoui was a member of student government, debate and PNN. Safroui also played on the tennis team.

"From this experience, I will be able to take away how all the groups are really coordinated. I like the structures of the clubs because they do cool things," Safraoui said.

The exchange students acknowledged that the challenges don't stop with liking American food and adjusting to American high school.

"I think it is really easy to meet people and talk to them. Everyone asks where you are from. But making friends to hang out with over here is not easy because the person knows you will leave and will lose you," Holzwarth said. "I don't blame them for feeling that way."

Different beginning, same journey

In U.S. History 1, Tsu Ting Tseng listens to social studies teacher Mr. Michael Knocke talk about the Civil War. "At first, it was hard for me to understand U.S. History, but Mr. Knocke constantly motivated me to try my best," Tseng said.

Seven students from around the world share the same journey.

The exchange students came to the United States for similar reasons.

"I came to the United States because I wanted to improve my English skills. I wanted to have an interesting year and to mature over here. I also wanted to experience a new view on life and cultures," Danish exchange student Celine Balmer said.

Balmer came to Indiana after spending several months in Idaho.

Norwegian exchange student Mikkel Drevland shared Balmer's dream.

"I wanted to come to the United States because I wanted to experience another culture for a long period of time," Drevland said.

Some of the exchange students said that they struggled with adjusting to American high school.

"MHS was very confusing. I didn't know the hallways or where to go. It was weird going to new classes with new people because back home, I have the same class of students for every subject all year long," Swiss exchange student Leon Kallert said.

The exchange students agreed that academics was not their biggest challenge.

"On my first day at MHS, I was really happy and everyone was nice to me. The classes were more fun and there was less attention on academics compared to back home. I feel like I can breathe here. It is nice," Tunisian exchange student Rahma Safroui said.

Besides dealing with the stress that comes with being a teenager, the exchange students had to deal with being away from their families.

"The hardest part about being an exchange student is being homesick. We have to put in a lot of effort to be strong. My host family is really supportive. They really treat me like family, and that is what I was looking for," Polish exchange student Mikolaj Kaszubowski said.

Kallert, who previously visited the United States for two vacations in New Jersey, visited Las Vegas, San Francisco and Chicago. He traveled to Maine to visit his best friend, who is also an exchange student.

"One of my memorable experiences was at Lake Michigan. I have never seen a lake that big before," Kallert said.

All the exchange students agreed that they all could take something away from the experience.

"I will miss the people I met in Idaho and here," Balmer said. "I will miss the person I am here and now because it will be hard to get it back."

Top Left: On an outing with friends from France, Rahma Safraoui stands near the beach in her hometown of Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia. "My favorite part of the day was going to the beach and hanging out with my friends," Safraoui said. She said that her hometown, although located in Africa, was once claimed by Greece. "I just love living there," Safraoui said. Top Right: Sporting spirit wear, Celine Balmer takes a selfie to send home. "The most memorable experience I had in the United States was going to football games. Nothing comes close to the school spirit here in the United States," Balmer said. Below: On a week-long vacation, Henry Holzwarth stands in front of a wall of graffiti in Berlin. "This was literally one of the best vacations I've ever had," Holzwarth said.

Poland

Tunisia

Taiwan

Students embrace fads

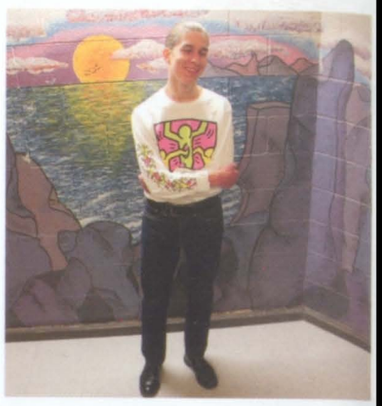
Below: With her hand on her hip, Junior Sydney Sheppard shows off her distressed high waist pants. Sheppard said high waist pants should be worn with crop tops and not long and baggy shirts. "I have at least nine pairs of high waist pants," Sheppard said. "I like the style and the way they make my body look."

Right: Taking a selfie, Senior Dominique Brown shows off his Pelle Pelle jacket. "I got the Pelle Pelle because I like a lot of name brand stuff," Brown said. "If you could afford it, why not?"

Above: Phone in hand, Junior Claribell Quinones takes a selfie. "I like to wear Pink (Victoria's Secret) because it's comfortable and my grandma got me into it," Quinones said. Quinones said Pink is a trend because it's expensive, and people want to look like they have money.

Below: In two poses, Sophomore Jennifer Bedolla shows off her soccer pants. Bedolla said she likes to wear soccer pants because they are cute and different. "You can wear almost anything with them, just not really big and long shirts," Bedolla said.

Right: Smiling at the camera, Senior TiShawn Steele shows off his outfit for the day, including a plaid shirt. "I started wearing plaid after the first fashion show. I rock it a lot of different ways," Steele said. Steele shops at an array of different clothing stores to complete his look.



Above: To express his individuality, German exchange student Henry Holzwarth shows off his German designer shirt by Michael Henry. "I get my inspiration from the '60s and '70s," Holzwarth said, "I just buy what looks cool." Holzwarth started dressing differently after noticing how everyone typically wears the same stuff.

Samsung Galaxy VS Apple iPhone

"I'm Team Galaxy because at the time, it was a bigger phone size, and you get to download free music and you have more memory."
Junior Joshua Hiller

"I'm Team Galaxy because when it first came out, I wanted something different because I had all Apple products. You also get free music, and it doesn't break as easily."
Senior Gildardo Quintero Jr.

"I'm Team Galaxy because that's what my parents got for me. It's bigger with a wider screen, and it has all these different little features."
Sophomore Torian Byrant

Using her Galaxy S5, Senior Diamond Allen checks her Snapchats. "My aunt bought me the Galaxy as a surprise," Allen said. "It's easy to use, and I like how it's thin and easy to hold." Allen has been Team Galaxy all her life but plans to change to Team iPhone to try something new.

Looking down at her iPhone 6, Senior Surrae Robinson checks her text messages. "It's such a great phone. All the apps I can download and the great picture quality make the phone," Robinson said. Robinson joined Team iPhone her sophomore year and plans to continue on that team.

"I'm Team iPhone because it gives better quality pictures. There are less viruses, and you are able to iMessage."
Junior Alanna Heath

"I'm Team iPhone because the pics come out really good."
Junior Brenda Garcia

"I'm Team iPhone because it's better and it's easier to use. There are only two buttons."
Sophomore Shannan Moore

Social media trending now

Left: Looking off into the sunset, Junior David Hinton shows off his vacation destination by uploading to Instagram. "I was watching the sunset. It's interesting because it's an infinity pool, and it looks like the pool and the ocean are one," Hinton said. Hinton enjoys Instagram because it allows him to stay connected with his friends despite long distances.

Right: As they get ready for cheerleading tryouts, Junior Mary Ann Wallace and Freshman Taylor Ballard make faces for the camera. "It helps me document my quickest moments for a 24-hour time period," Wallace said. "I enjoy it because it's like your own personal reality show." Wallace joined the Snapchat craze. After trying it one time, she said she then became addicted.

Showing style always important

In 1998, when English teacher Erin Mulloy-Flores graduated, guys and girls wore baggy jeans and flannel shirts. Flared jeans were starting to come back in style for the girls.

"The styles girls are wearing now were more popular when I was in grade school," Ms. Flores said. "Skinny jeans, tapered jeans, flats, off-the-shoulder tops, jeans with floral designs, palazzo pants."

Style and fads, it seems, come and go and come around again. But fashion has always been important.

Trending now is the brand PINK, as are denim jackets, high-waist jeans and Adidas soccer pants.

Some fashion decisions are driven by comfort, as they were in the past.

"Yoga pants and Jordans are the trends I usually follow," Junior Koreena Ramos said. "They are extremely comfortable."

"More kids dress casually than when I was in high school," Ms. Flores said. "Fashion still seems important now, but more kids will come to school in T-shirts and sweat pants or yoga pants."

Math teacher Mrs. Nancy Draper remembers girls wearing stretch pants, "leggings," under a longer top when she graduated in 1969.

"In my day, we definitely wanted to make sure our wardrobe fit into the current fad. It seems like more teens today are willing to express themselves with a more independent fashion sense," Mrs. Draper said.

Senior Reesie Woods III said the media influences teens today, but most will adapt the look to create their own unique style.

Many, like Woods, find a way to incorporate current trends into their own style.

"My style is different," Woods said. "It varies each day."

Today, Woods said, white T-shirts, boyfriend jeans, joggers, Timberland boots and Jordans are also popular among teens.

Senior Justus Collins sports what he calls a Chicago Southside street style.

On any day, Collins can be seen wearing Balenciaga shoes and jacket, Rock Revival jeans or Robin's Jeans.

"Girls are what motivate me to dress my best for school because when you look good, you gain more confidence," Collins said.

Woods agreed.

"If I look good," Woods said, "I do better and am more confident."

Students show spirit as they participate in Spirit Week

The mood of the students was upbeat throughout the week as they celebrated Homecoming 2014, even though the weather limited activities Thursday evening.

This year's Spirit Week consisted of Match Your Twin Monday, Tacky Wacky Tuesday, Wear Pink Wednesday, Throwback Jersey Thursday and Pirate Pride Friday.

"I participated in Spirit Week because it's my senior year, and I plan on doing everything this year," Senior Brandon Taylor said.

Students raided their parents' closets to find outfits from the '70s to wear Tuesday. Others conspired with friends to become twins. The football team cleaned out their locker room and sold old jerseys.

"I participated because it was fun and I like school spirit. Tacky Tuesday was my favorite day because everyone looked funny. One boy had ramen noodles in his ear," Junior Katherine Williamson said.

"The parade and Goofy Games were canceled because of the weather. There were huge storms coming in, and the field was going to be too wet to do anything on," Student Government Sponsor Ms. Samantha St. Aubin said.

The administration and Ms. St. Aubin decided to quickly move the float competition indoors to the Power Mechanics garage and judged the sophomores as the winners.

During halftime of the football game, Coach Zac Wells presents Senior Terrance Grayson with a football. The football team selected Grayson, a two-sport athlete who played wide receiver, as Mr. Football. "He sets an example for the young guys on the team, and no matter what he chooses to play in college, I know he will be successful," wide receiver Coach Sean Kinsey said.

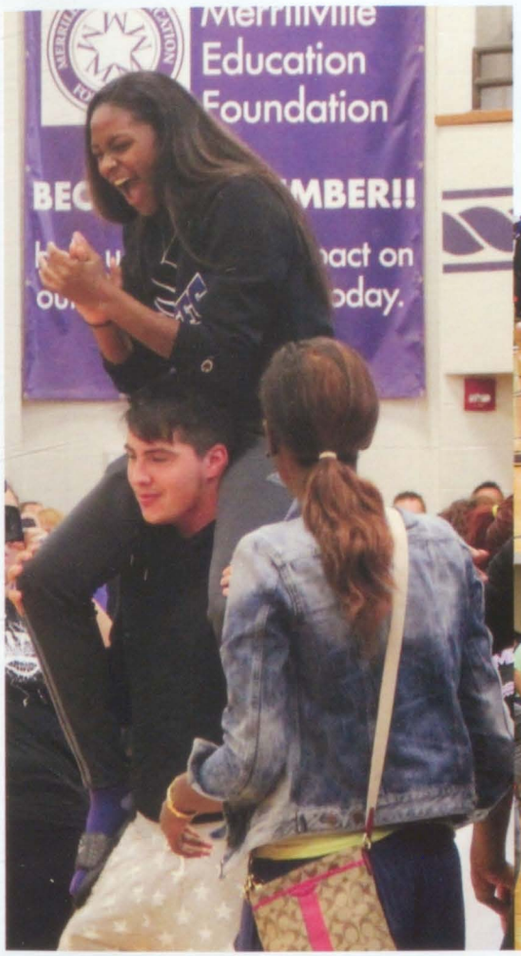
Match Your Twin Monday

In their matching galaxy T-shirts from Pac Sun that they each received for Christmas 2013, Juniors Dalin Tape and Brandon Long model their twin outfits. The two friends said they planned the outfit the day before Spirit Week started. "We had the same shirt, so we just decided that would be our Twin Day outfit," Long said.

Tacky Wacky Tuesday

Wearing the tackiest outfit she could create, Senior Vanessa Yanez searches through a pile of old football jerseys, trying to find one to wear Thursday of Spirit Week. "My favorite part was seeing the looks on people's face when they saw my hair and how tall it was," Yanez said.

Cheering for her class in the dance competition, Senior Jaz Talley sits atop the shoulders of Senior Jonathan Streck. Talley said she was behind Streck in the bleachers and took advantage of her position to climb on his back. "The pep rally was fun. They should have more," Talley said



Top: In an unexpected performance during the Friday afternoon pep rally, Freshman De'Leon Palmer breakdances for the crowd. "I didn't know I was going against other people," Palmer said. "I was excited to perform in front of a lot of people. It made me feel like I was famous." Palmer recalled being nervous as he danced in front of "a thousand people." Bottom: With her superhero costume on, science teacher Mrs. Patricia Robison prepares for a game of Tug of War by gripping the rope. Mrs. Robison said she participated because she had to represent the freshmen and female lovers of science. "I enjoyed all the energy," Mrs. Robison said. "It's good fun and schools should have elements of fun and memories."

Friday features pep session, naming queen, Mr. Football

On Friday afternoon, students came to the main gym for a pep session.

After the band, Color Guard and cheerleaders performed and queen candidates were introduced, Principal Mr. Michael Krutz brought out the bright yellow ropes for the game of Tug of War that had been cancelled Thursday evening.

In the final round, amid screams from the crowd, the juniors battled the teachers. When the administrators stepped in to help the teachers, the seniors offered the juniors their help, and the juniors won bragging rights of beating the teachers.

In the dance competition, the seniors won, but the thrill of the afternoon occurred when Mrs. Melissa Sickinger performed a dance stall on her back with her feet high above her head.

That evening, the football team defeated Valparaiso.

During halftime of the football game, Mr. Football Terrance Grayson and Homecoming Queen Kayla Grant were announced.

"I was shocked when I heard my name get called because I didn't think I was going to win. I was happy, blessed and thankful that my team picked me," Senior Captain Terrance Grayson said.

Wear Pink Wednesday

Dressed in pink to support Breast Cancer Awareness, Seniors Anna Feliciano and Chloe Nelson eat lunch with Chloe's younger brother, Freshman Tyler Nelson. "I wore pink because on Wednesdays, we wear pink," Chloe said. Even though this wasn't Chloe's favorite spirit day, she said she participated because she wanted to show her support for her coach's wife, who has been diagnosed with breast cancer.

Throwback Jersey Thursday

Wearing her older brother's Chad Johnson Cincinnati Bengals jersey, Junior Angelic Tillman enjoys lunch with her friends. "Jersey Day was fun. I liked how they tried something new this year," Tillman said. Tillman said she knew her brother, 2008 graduate Devon Tillman, would let her borrow the jersey.

Pirate Pride Friday

To participate in Spirit Week, Freshman Melvin Magee chose to wear a purple jersey. Magee said he participated in Spirit Week because his friend asked him. His favorite day was Tacky Wacky Tuesday, a day students show spirit by dressing in something they don't normally wear at school or at home.

Students step up to enjoy 'A Night at the Carnival'

Months of planning resulted in a successful Homecoming for the students attending the dance.

Student Government members started meeting on the second Wednesday after school started. They continued meeting every Wednesday for about two months to plan the dance.

"Members suggested different themes to be put on the ballot. They voted and decided upon the theme 'Step Right Up! A Night at the Carnival'," Student Government Sponsor Ms. Samantha St. Aubin said.

Members set up for the dance both Friday and Saturday. Decorations included balloons, lights and a cardboard cutout of a Ferris wheel. They also hired a balloon artist to make balloon animals for the students attending the dance.

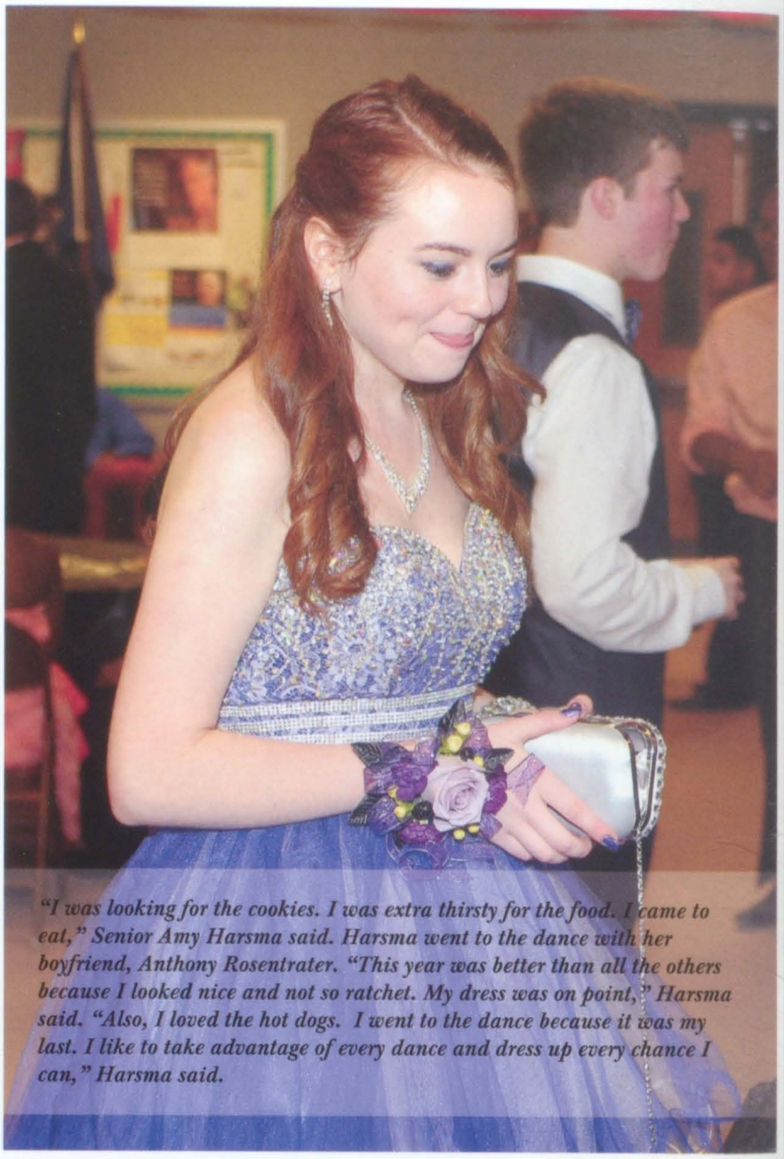
"My goal was to make sure everything got completed, so we could have fun that night," Student Government Member Senior Cynthia Basu-Chavez said.

To incorporate the theme, student government members decided upon a new array of food options – popcorn, hot dogs and cotton candy. Members thought it would be neat to have a cotton candy machine at the dance.

"Cotton candy is the worst to work with. It gets everywhere. It was in my hair and in my ears. Cotton candy was on my glasses, and it even made my hands sticky," Mr. Jake Stafford said. "It was like sand at the beach."

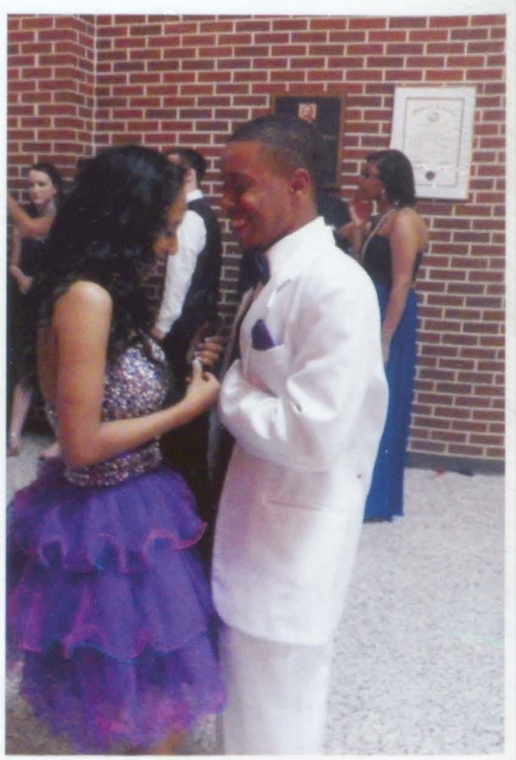
About 1100 students attended the dance on October 4, including Homecoming Queen Candidate Senior Arriana Jimenez.

"Homecoming was memorable because it was my first year having a date. I went with my boyfriend, Angel Guerrero from Lake Station," Jimenez said.



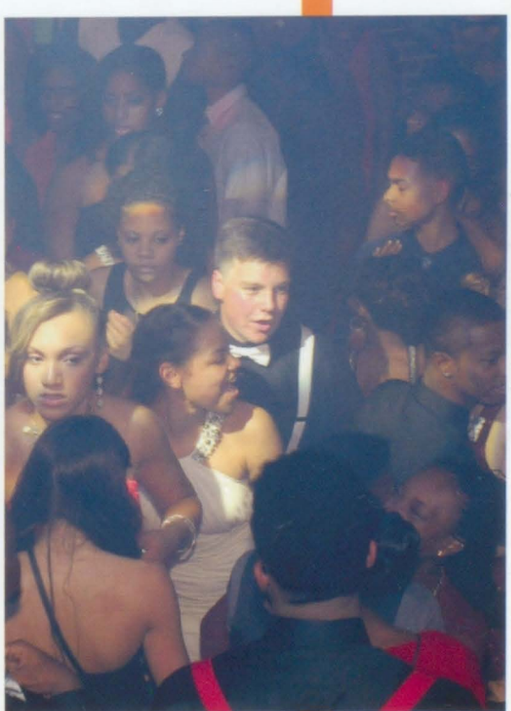
"I was looking for the cookies. I was extra thirsty for the food. I came to eat," Senior Amy Harsma said. Harsma went to the dance with her boyfriend, Anthony Rosentrater. "This year was better than all the others because I looked nice and not so ratchet. My dress was on point," Harsma said. "Also, I loved the hot dogs. I went to the dance because it was my last. I like to take advantage of every dance and dress up every chance I can," Harsma said.

Left: In a crowd, Senior Mam Samba dances to the music. "This is my first year, and I went because it's my senior year, all my friends were going and it will be a good memory 10 years down the road," Samba said. "My most memorable moment was this noodly guy dancing," Samba said. Right: It's all smiles and laughs as Senior Mark Benyoun Jr. and Sophomore Symone Campero gaze into each other's eyes. "The whole night was a memorable moment," Benyoun said. "I enjoyed spending time with my date, and I was focused on having a good time."

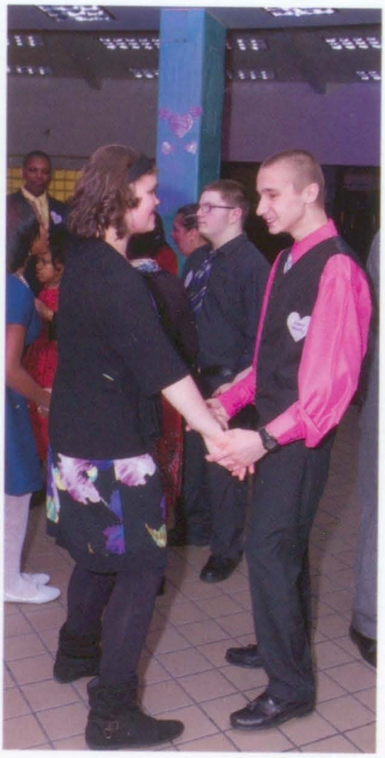


Top Left: With her father behind her, Senior Kayla Grant smiles after she is named Homecoming Queen 2014. "When they announced the winner and they said my name, I was excited that I was going to be Homecoming Queen," Grant said. "I went before, but what made this year special is that I was queen, so I felt honored. After the dance, we were supposed to go to Longhorn, but they wouldn't let us in. So we decided to go to Red Lobster, but sadly, some of my friends were locked out." Top Right: Using his hands, Mr. Jacob Stafford spins the cotton candy. "I had no sticks, so I had to do it by hand. There was cotton candy everywhere," Mr. Stafford said. Mr. Stafford said he made cotton candy for about three hours. "I had a lot of fun seeing the students dressed up and having a good time at a student function," Mr. Stafford said. Below: Dancing with her date, Junior Casllie Scott attends the Homecoming Dance for the first time. "The best part of the night was when they played a slow song and my boyfriend told me he loves me," Scott said.

Left: At the dance talking to his friends, Sophomore Wakeylon Briner dances with Freshman Keana Dorris. "After the dance, I went to a party. That was my favorite part of the night," Briner said. Right: With his date Senior Morgan Harris, Junior Brian Baran shows off his dance moves on the floor. "Hanging out with all my friends and dancing was my favorite part of the night," Baran said. After dancing the night away, Baran and his friends went out to eat at Red Robin and back to his house to relax from the long night they had.



Top: Members of the Family, Career and Consumer Leaders of America and Student Goverment donated money to provide gift bags for the young women and men who attended the dance. Makeup, perfume and jewelry were included in the bags for young women, and cologne, baseball caps and basketballs went into the bags for the men. Bottom Left: Ready to start the night, Senior Crystal Recio begins to clap her hands. "I had a good time dancing with my friends," Recio said. Recio said she spent most of the night with Junior Katrina Yon. Bottom Right: During the dance, Sophomore Jenise Allen receives a gift from FCCLA sponsor Ms. Carol VonBehren. "My favorite gifts of the night were the earrings and a lunch box," Allen said. Allen said that hanging out with friends made the night more enjoyable.



Right: Holding hands, Freshman Savannah Shirley and her boyfriend, Freshman George Perosky, dance. "My mom did my hair but I picked out my own dress," Shirley said. Being able to hang out with friends was the highlight of her night, Shirley said. Far Right: With hands moving, Class of 2010 Merrillville graduate Russell Parkhurst begins to dance. Parkhurst and many other alumni return each year.

With a smile on her face, Junior Katrina Yon dances. "I had a very good time," Yon said. Yon said that her favorite part was dancing with her friend, Senior Crystal Recio.

FCCLA hosts special dance

Every year Family, Consumer and Career Leaders of America sponsor a Valentine's dance for special needs students from MHS and other area schools.

Sponsor Ms. Carol VonBehren said FCCLA started hosting the dance 20 years ago when the president had a sister who was special needs and saw the importance of doing something special for others.

"FCCLA members felt much rewarded to help out the other students," Ms. VonBehren said.

Current students and those who attended in the past each receive an invitation to come and enjoy the night. People from about seven different schools attended this year, including some Merrillville graduates. About 20 more students came this year than last.

Those who attend the dance look forward to the event.

"Graduates remember the dance from the past years and call one of the special needs teachers and tell them to put them on the list," Ms. VonBehren said.

When the dance begins, every student receives a gift bag. FCCLA members said the students that attended the dance enjoyed every part from the beginning to the end, and the music made everyone want to have a good time.

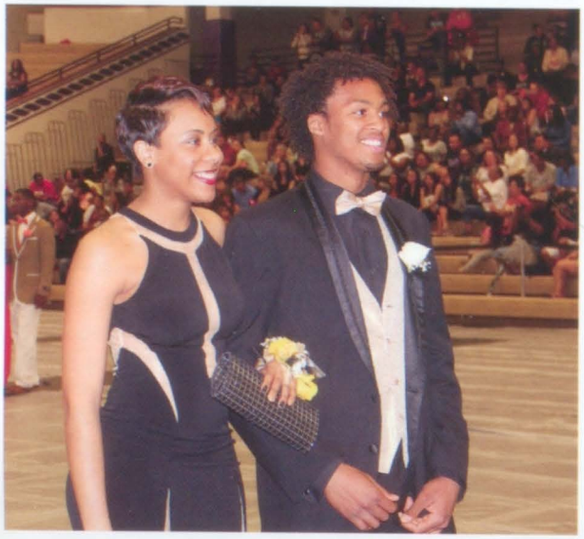
"They were really excited to see the decorations," Senior Vallee Smith said.

After the dance was over and FCCLA members cleaned up, they said they thought the dance was a success. Ms.VonBehren said the special needs students and their parents had a terrific time.

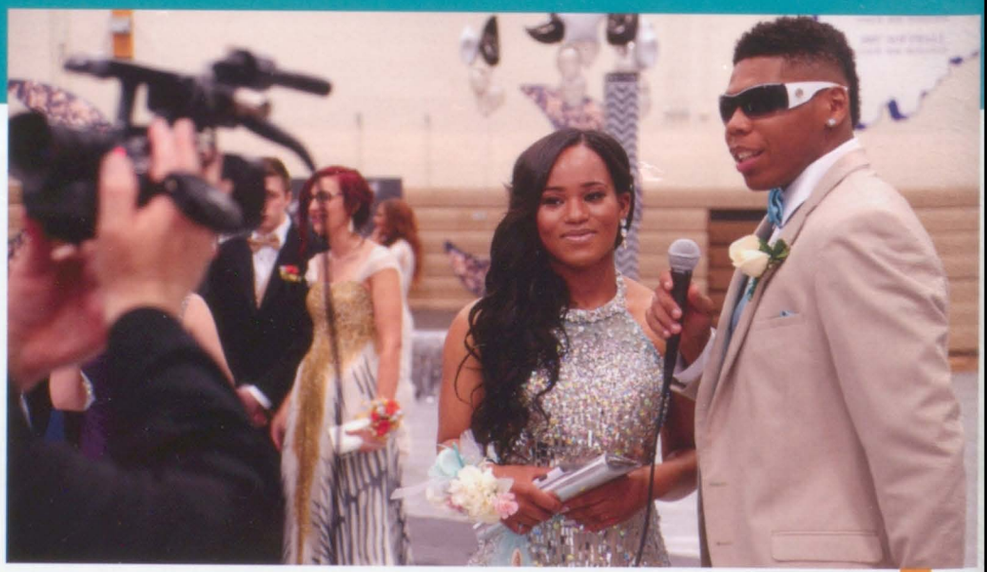
"The parents were really appreciative about the dance in the end," Senior Shauntielle James said.

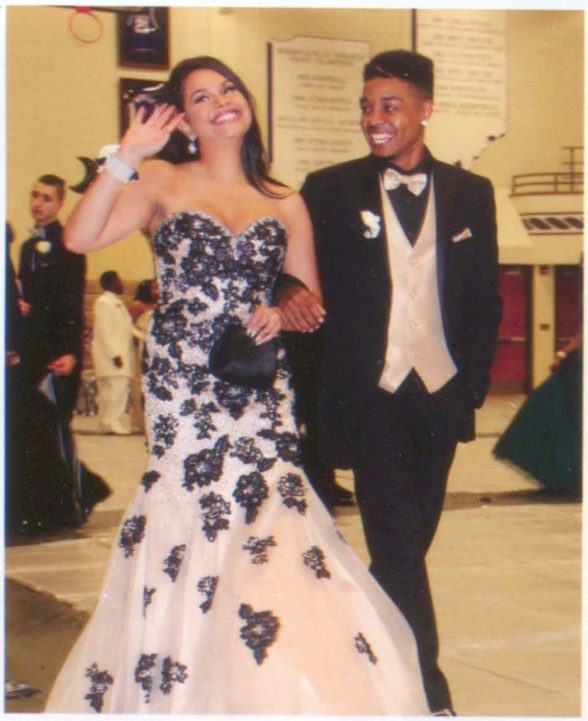
Left: At the dance, Merrillville graduates Aeriol and Tracey Boggs enjoy dancing. Every year many Merrillville Graduates return to the dance. Top: FCCLA member Senior Jermisa Williams gives Danny Aviles his gift bag.

Strolling in the Grand March, Senior Romeo Munoz and his girlfriend Senior Anyssa Carbajal were prepared for the long-awaited night. "My goal was to remember this night for years to come and I accomplished that," Munoz said. Munoz and his group went to Six Flags the following morning.

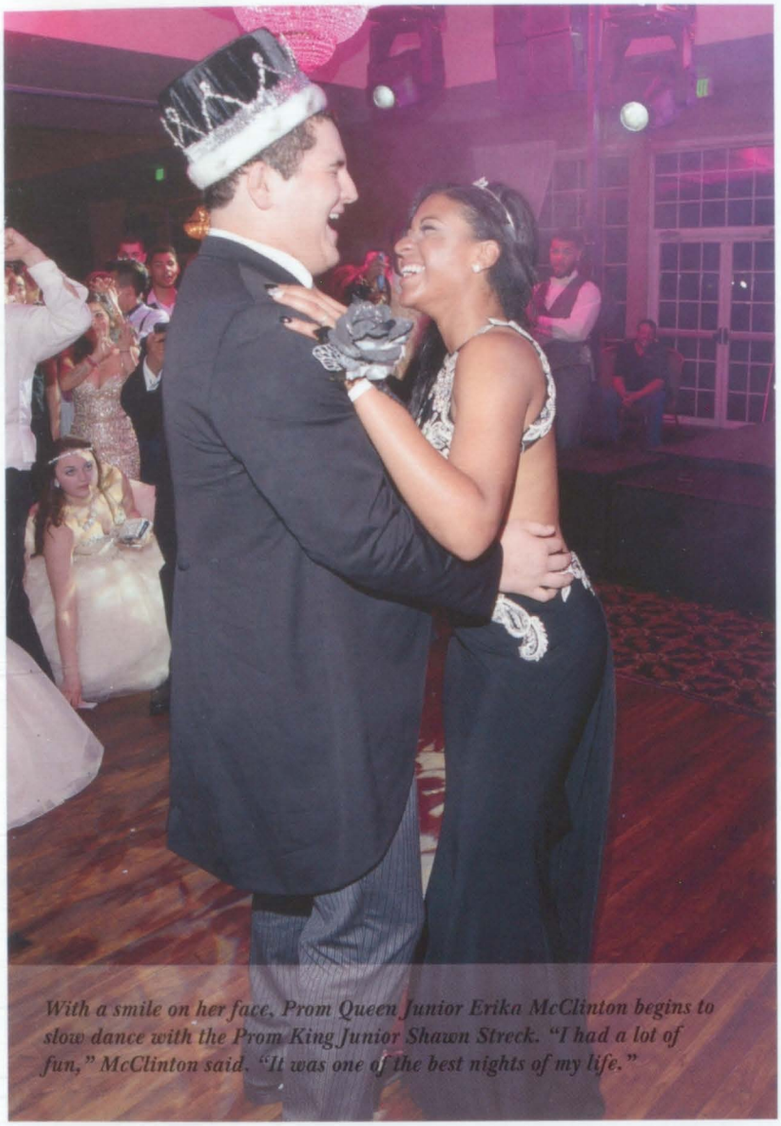


Above: Eyes on the dance floor, Senior Terrance Grayson and his girlfriend Senior Serena Ford dance the Cupid Shuffle. After Prom, Grayson and his group of friends went to the Grand Lux Café. The next day, they went to Six Flags in Gurnee, Illinois. "This year was definitely more memorable than last," Grayson said. Left: With arms linked together, Senior Jamal Duke and his date Senior Jamia Dunn beam as they walk in the Grand March. Anticipating the end of his senior year, Duke said he wanted to make Prom a great night. "Dancing the night away with friends was very exciting," Duke said.





Left: Waving towards the crowd, Senior Alexis McCaine is ready to have a night she will always remember with her date Senior Devin Martin. "Since I didn't go to Prom last year, I didn't know what to expect," McCaine said. McCaine and her group of friends spent Prom weekend in downtown Chicago. "It was nice being able to spend the weekend with my friends," McCaine said. Above: As PNN director Mr. Brian Past films, Senior Sydney Tucker and date Senior Ramone Atkins Frazier share their plans for the weekend. "I loved seeing all the different trends and how well put together everybody looked," Tucker said. After browsing the Internet for ideas, Tucker found the hairstyle she thought would look best. "I decided to go with what looked good with my dress," Tucker said.



With a smile on her face, Prom Queen Junior Erika McClinton begins to slow dance with the Prom King Junior Shawn Streck. "I had a lot of fun," McClinton said. "It was one of the best nights of my life."

A Night to Sparkle

In years past, the Prom committee of business teacher Mrs. Rae Lopez, Family and Consumer Science teacher Ms. Sara Stallings and English teacher Mrs. Kristina Musielak have had difficulty coming up with a theme the students would like.

The committee used to have a prom meeting and students could come in and state their opinion. Mrs. Lopez came up with an easier strategy.

"We talked to different kids to see what they thought and I'd walk around with a book of themes and ask kids which one," Mrs. Lopez said. "They ended up picking that one (A Night to Sparkle)."

Students said that the Prom committee did a great job decorating and setting up.

"I like the theme way better than last year's theme (Sweet Dreams) because it actually went with being glamorous," Senior Araceli Hernandez said.

While some walked into the Grand March and noticed the theme, the Prom Court noticed all the people staring at them as they were getting on the stage. The Prom Court included Juniors Miracle Akins, Viridiana Carrillo, Maya Griffin, Erika McClinton, Ashley Mendez, Antonio Cornelius Jr., Jacob Covaciu, Joshua Hiller, David Hinton II and Shawn Streck.

"I felt really nervous when I got on stage because I had no idea who was going to win," McClinton, who was crowned queen, said. "When they called my name, I was really excited, but my face didn't show it."

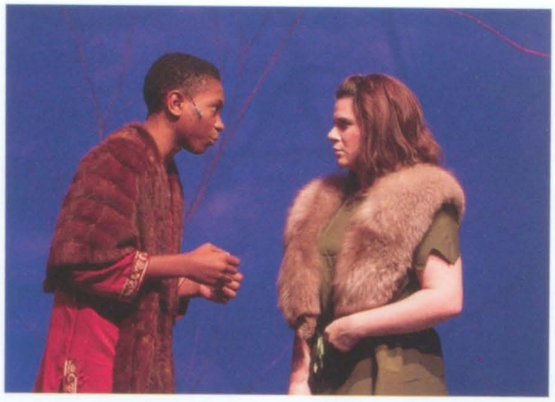
"It was weird at first," King Streck said. "I didn't think I was going to win. I was shocked and excited."

After moving from the Grand March to the Avalon, students enjoyed the dance and their weekend after. For some, attending Prom for the second time was better than their first.

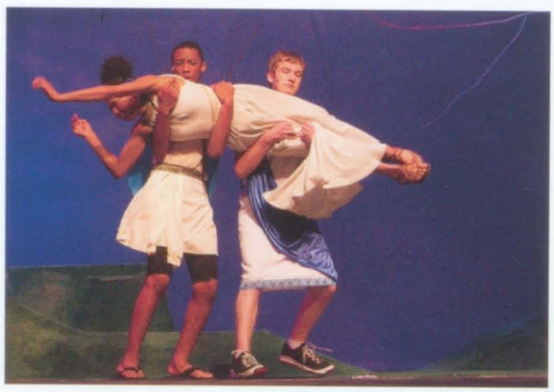
"The Avalon was enjoyable. I had a good time with my friends," Senior Andres Carrillo said. "My senior year was better because I did more my senior year than my junior year. We did more as a group. I had more memories this year and I looked better too."

Left: Before entering the Avalon, Sophomore Ivori Fulton is assisted by her boyfriend Senior Darshawn Woodard. At her first Prom, Fulton said she anticipated the night to come. "We went to Cut Steakhouse in Chicago and drove around for a while," Fulton said. Top Right: Leaning in towards one another, Senior Mariana Cantu and her date Colton Maynard discuss their plans for the night. "We went to LongHorn Steakhouse after Prom and spent Saturday in Chicago," Cantu said. After searching online for a Prom dress, Cantu came across the perfect style. "At first I wanted to do a princess-style dress," Cantu said. "However, when I tried on the mermaid-style dress, I knew that was the one for me." Bottom Right: Arms wrapped around one another, Senior Isis Nash and her boyfriend Tyler Payne from Lake Central High School gaze into each other's eyes. "Spending time with my boyfriend made Prom very special," Nash said. The couple took a party bus to the Grand Lux Café after Prom. The following day, they decided to go to Wisconsin Dells.

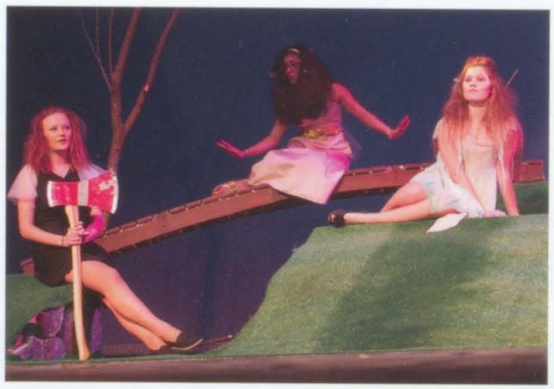
FALL PLAY



To ensure Demetrius will fall in love with Helena, Oberon (Freshman JaKobe Wilborn) orders Puck (Junior Hope Krajnak) to put the love potion in Demetrius's eye. Krajnak said she became her character by watching YouTube videos and different characterizations and added her own twist to it. "This scene helped explain what was going on," Krajnak said. "It also set up new plot points."



To keep Hermia (Sophomore Nia Wells) from fighting with Helena (Sophomore Kathryn Jurczyk), Demetrius (Sophomore Ronald Brewer) and Lysander (Junior Brandon Pelaquin) carry Hermia off. "My favorite scene was the fight scene. I was angry at my best friend for stealing the person I loved, so I tried to fight her," Wells said. What Hermia doesn't realize is that Lysander is under a spell cast by Oberon and that he really loves her.



To appease Titania, the fairy queen (Junior Imani Purnell), three fairies sing her a lullaby. Freshmen Kyra Stevens and Jasmine Jaramillo sing along with Senior Cassidy Koontz. "I have been acting since I was six. I've been in two fall plays and did the region show last year," Koontz said.

The production of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" visits a fairy king, elves, wood sprites, magic and, most of all, love. As Lysander says in the play, "The course of true love never did run smooth," and the lesson learned is that love can make a fool of almost anyone.

The story line is simple. Hermia is in love with Lysander, but her father wants her to marry Demetrius. The two elope, and they are quickly followed by Demetrius and Helena.

Puck tries to play matchmaker and creates havoc among the four of them. All the while, the fairies change the lives of some young actors attempting to perform a play in the woods.

For many months, the cast and crew came to rehearsals every Monday through Thursday, but they began rehearsing daily to perfect their performances.

Throughout high school, students read and analyze various Shakespeare works, but Thespian Troupe director Mr. Thomas Mackey said that seeing and hearing what is going on helps students more.

"I think it's important to do Shakespeare once every four years," Mr. Mackey said. "Students are exposed to Shakespeare in performance, which is much more enriching than just reading it in class."

Unlike the typical language of high schoolers today, the play is written in Shakespearean language, a dialogue that is harder to comprehend and perform.

"I feel like the selection of the play was great because it was very challenging," Sophomore Kathryn Jurczyk said. "Now that I've done Shakespeare, I feel like I can do a lot more."

Tragedy is a main part of Shakespeare's plays, but in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," that wasn't the case.

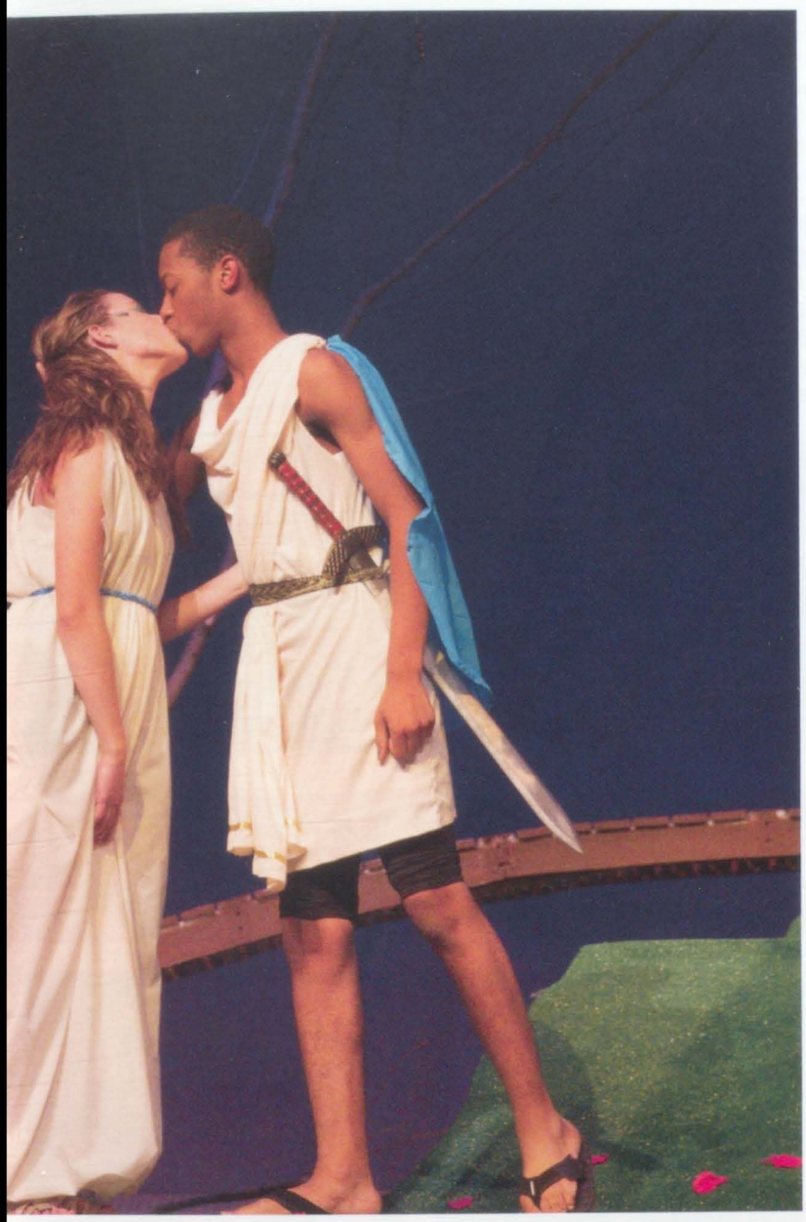
"Students will see that Shakespeare is actually funny and that you don't need to be a Rhodes Scholar to follow the story," Mr. Mackey said. "Shakespeare is easier to understand than they think it is."

"The characters in the play were hilarious, especially (Junior) Rashawn (Mills)," Jurczyk said.

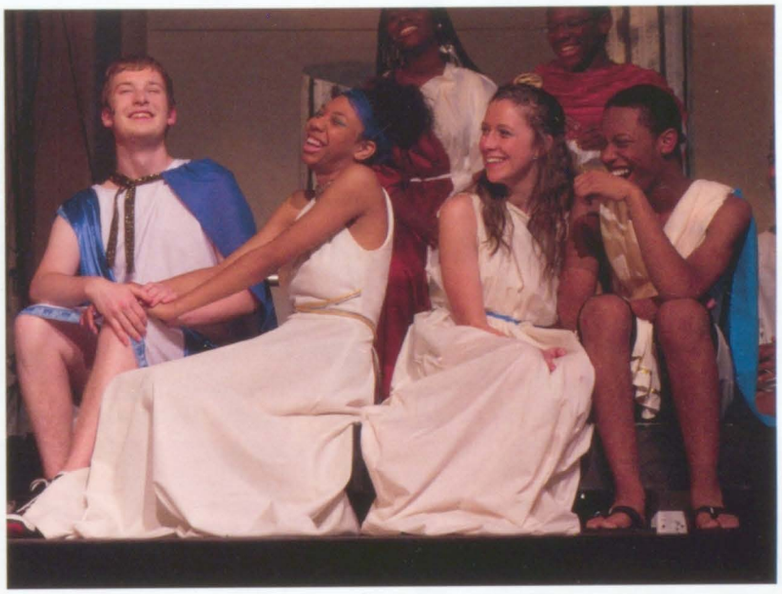
Mills played Nick Bottom, a member of the theatre troupe who is turned into a donkey's head.

The main conflict is what sets the play on course, which is a father disagreeing with a daughter's choice of a husband.

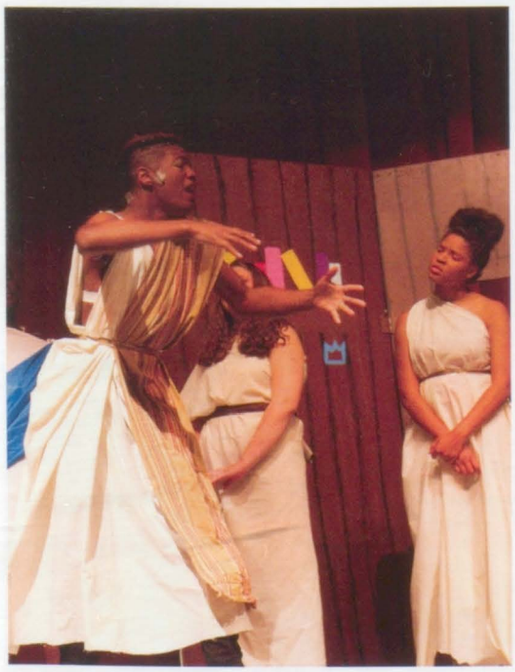
"In high school, parents don't want their child dating or talking to whom they dislike," Mr. Mackey said. "But, on a deeper level, it is about consciousness, and if people are truly awake to the world around them and them pushing what they don't like into their subconscious."

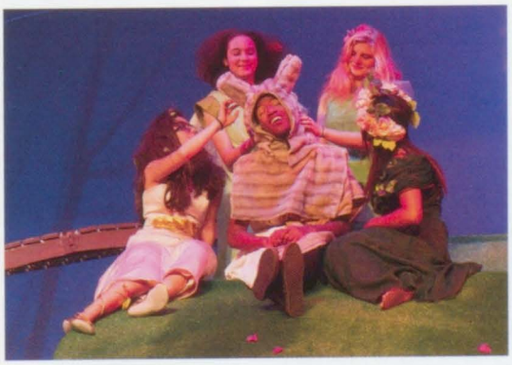


Father's ' dream' and fairy tricks hamper love



The Athenians, characters in the main plot, watch the play-within-a-play. Lysander (Junior Brandon Pelaquin) and his love, Hermia (Sophomore Nia Wells), Helena (Sophomore Kathryn Jurczyk) and Demetrius (Sophomore Ronald Brewer) enjoy a funny scene.
To show his love for Helena (Sophomore Kathryn Jurczyk), Demetrius (Sophomore Ronald Brewer) kisses her in front of Egeus. Egeus did not want Demetrius with Helena because he believed his daughter, Hermia, was the better choice. "We had a lot of chemistry on stage," Jurczyk said. "We were really comfortable around each other."





Left: As the acting troupe plans the play-within-a-play, Nick Bottom (Junior Rashawn Mills) insists he can play both Pyramus and Thisbe. Snug the Joiner (Junior Xakilah Williamson) listens intently. "I liked the play-within-a-play scene. It was the part of the play that was fun. Everything picked up there and it was just the funniest part," Williamson said. Middle: After Nick Bottom (Junior Rashawn Mills) has been turned into a donkey's head by Puck, he sits with the fairies. The Queen of the Fairies, Titania (Imani Purnell), has been given a love potion and tells the fairies to do whatever Bottom asks. Senior Samantha Keith scratches his head. "I auditioned for this play to get out of my comfort zone. Even though I hate Shakespeare, I wanted to stop being a techy and try acting for my last year," Keith said. Right: In the enactment of the Greek myth, "Pyramus and Thisbe," Pyramus (Junior Rashawn Mills) takes a dramatic leap after he stabs himself. "My character thinks he is very intelligent, but is rotten. People admire him, and he tries to override the manager when we do the play-within-a-play. The fairy queen falls in love with me, and I wreak a lot of havoc in the show," Mills said.

‘ Phantom of the Opera’ returns for an encore

The “Phantom of the Opera” cast and crew created magic on stage and behind the scenes.

Choir director Mrs. Melinda Reinhart decided to revive the play after four years. Members of the cast practiced and prepared for nine weeks. Some of the cast and crew watched the past performance and the 25th anniversary edition to prepare for their roles in the play.

“I thought it was a once-in-a-lifetime bucket-list thing,” Mrs. Reinhart said. “I decided to do it again because we had the voices. I think we’re the only school in Northwest Indiana to attempt it once, let alone twice.”

The play calls for many special effects, including the boat that was used during the Phantom scene. The boat is really a Hoveround which was driven by Christine instead of the Phantom. The fog was created by machines. One of the choir boosters filled coolers with ice, which made the fog hug the ground. Three stage crew members on the catwalk pulled the chandelier, causing it to sway and fall.

“My favorite scene was the scene going into the lair,” Sophomore Cherise Higgins said. “I like it because it is the most known scene. I almost fell out of the boat.”

The play takes place during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Mrs. Reinhart said she wanted to stay true to the time period.

“My favorite scene was ‘Masquerade,’” Mrs. Reinhart said. “It was more colorful than the rest of the show and different. That’s when the Phantom shows up and brings his latest opera.”

Junior Jacob Reinhart was cast as the lead role of Phantom in the musical. He created his own mask, which took about a week.

“I used face prosthetics, false limbs, a face piece, a bald cap, some skull pieces, and I glued hair onto it,” Jacob said. “I spent an hour and a half putting it on before each show.”

Mrs. Reinhart said she stayed true to the original script. By keeping the original lines and music, people who attended the Reinhart show would see the same show as in a professional opera house.

“This is the same show that you would see if you went to a show in London,” Mrs. Reinhart said. “In terms of music and dialogue, I kept everything the same.”

The songs in the play contained a lot of high notes, which were sometimes hard to pull off.

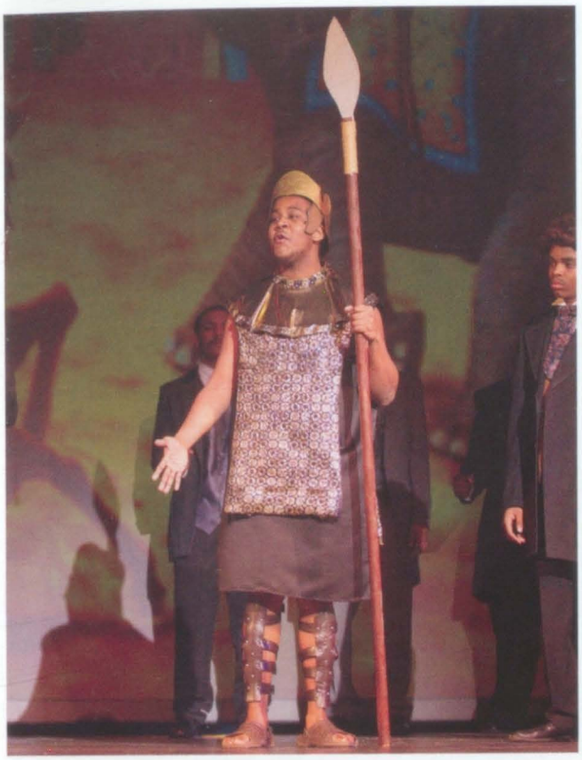
“My favorite song was ‘Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again,’” Junior Scarlett Smith said. “It’s the most emotional song. It ties her (Christine Daaé’s) whole relationship with her father and the Phantom.”

When the play ended, most of the cast and crew were sad it was over, but they were proud that they performed the play.

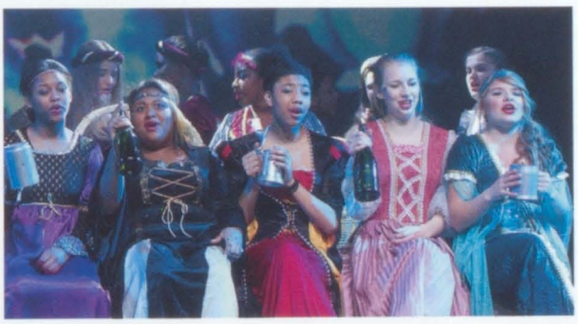
“I think the best part was putting the musical all together,” Senior Quanisha Vaughn said. “But I’m glad we did. We did what most of the other schools couldn’t.”

Right: As the song “Hannibal” closes, Carlotta Giudicelli (Senior Quanisha Vaughn) lifts her hands and cries out the final note. “A high-maintenance diva,” Vaughn said of her character. Vaughn said she doesn’t have much in common with her character. “I liked so many songs that I could not pick just one,” Vaughn said. “Some of my favorites were ‘Il Muto’ because it was funny and ‘Prima Donna’ because I was the center of attention,” Vaughn said. During the play, Carlotta becomes enraged as she is made to give up her spot as lead soprano in the opera house. Bottom: To woo Christine (Sophomore Cherise Higgins), the Phantom (Junior Jacob Reinhart) holds her close. “I love my character’s dynamic between angry and sad,” Reinhart said. “He can easily snap back between the two. At the end of the play, he did the right thing, even if all along he was quote unquote doing the wrong thing.” During the scene "Music of the Night," Christine finds a mannequin wearing her dress and passes out. When she awakens, she pulls the Phantom’s mask off, revealing his face.

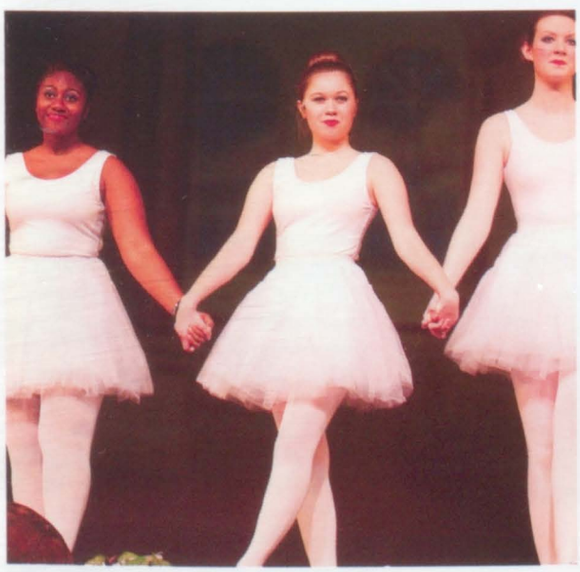
SPRING MUSICAL



Left: With a spear in hand, Ubaldo Piangi (Senior Nigel Moore) returns from war in the dress rehearsals for "Hannibal's" opening night. "I think my character is dramatic and over the top," Moore said. "When my character died, I felt as if I was finally done with the show." Piangi was killed by the Phantom during the live performance of "Don Juan the Triumphant." Bottom: At the party, Seniors Ashley Benkert and Tilaya Harris and Junior Nia Wells play the drunken crowd. "My favorite song was 'Masquerade,'" Benkert said. "I enjoyed the dancing, notes and tune." During the "Masquerade" scene, the Phantom brings in a new opera for the people to perform. They agreed to it and cast Christine in the lead.



In the "Il Muto" scene, Christine Daaé (Sophomore Cherise Higgins) kisses the hand of Carlotta (Senior Quanisha Vaughn). Higgins said her favorite songs to perform were "Think of Me" because she got to wear the purple dress and "The Phantom of the Opera Song" because it's an iconic moment in the play. During the "Il Muto" scene, Carlotta's voice goes out, and the stage managers are forced to let Christine sing the lead.



In the ballet sequence, Meg Giry (Senior Cassidy Koontz) performs with the dancers. "I think me and my character are similar in that we care about our friends," Koontz said. "But the thing that I like least about her is that she is always trying to figure everyone out and is always in people's business."

Once the Phantom has made his appearance known, new managers of the opera house, Andre (Sophomore Tyreak Thomas) and Firmin (Sophomore Ronald Brewer), become enraged with the Phantom's requests. "I think my character is the nice one out of the managers," Thomas said. "I am more assertive, but I guess that goes along with acting." The stage managers constantly refuse to follow the Phantom's orders, resulting in terrible consequences.

Showcasing student talent

Students showcase their talents at the annual Revue. Performers auditioned and attended two rehearsals.

"As far as I know, the Performing Arts Department has sponsored the Off-Broadway Revue way back into the '70s when my husband went here," Director Mrs. Melinda Reinhart said.

The show raised about $1000 that will be used for future performing arts endeavors, including the spring musical and fall play.

The Revue consisted of 26 acts that showcased dance, spoken poetry and musical talent.

"My favorite part about the Revue is watching the kids perform their different talents," Mrs. Reinhart said. "I love seeing what they learned and how they apply it to the music they pick."

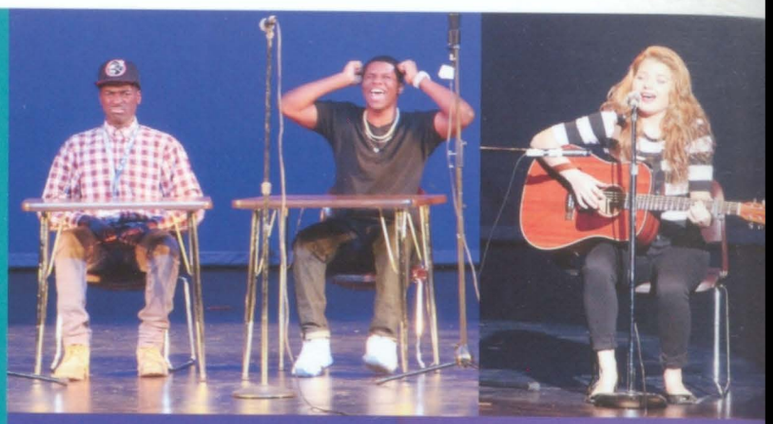
Returning performer Senior Reesie Woods choose to sing Alicia Keys's "Fallin'." Woods decided to revamp the song by playing the song over a beat produced by a friend. His performance also included Junior Antonio Cornelius Jr. rapping.

"Performing on stage is like a dream," Woods said. "I do not participate in any performing arts, so the Revue gave me an opportunity to showcase my talent."

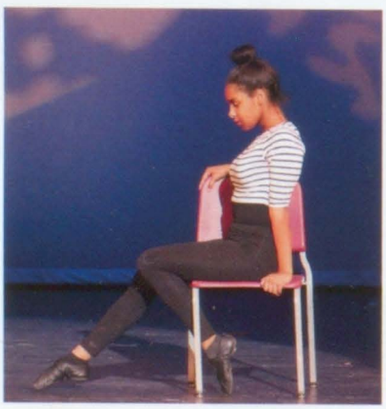
Senior Charity Gilkey, a captain on the dance team, performed a self-choreographed routine to the song "I Was Here" by Beyoncé in the second act. Gilkey started performing six years ago at her church.

"I worked on my dance for about three weeks," Gilkey said, "I love to inspire others with a piece of art. Dancing helps me express myself."

While they strum their guitars, Seniors Wynonna Wagonblast and Hope Wagonblast perform the song "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away" by The Beatles. "I have good muscle memory to remember what to play," Wynonna said. "Continuous training of each segment on my part, then putting it all together is what let me execute this song." Wynonna said that she had been practicing the song for six months but knew how to sing it for two years.



Top Left: Arms in the air and pouting, Sophomore Devyn Williams and Junior Antonio Cornelius Jr. rap their song "Da-Wah." The duo wanted to perform together because Williams will not attend Merrillville High School next year. "The song starts off with us having a conversation about what my mother would do if I ever got bad grades," Cornelius said. Top Right: Strumming her guitar with her eyes closed, Senior Meagan Clarkson sings "Riptide" by Vance Joy. Clarkson said she always wanted to play the guitar since she was little, and when she was 13, she taught herself to play. "I just auditioned with a song I knew," Clarkson said. "I practiced every day on my voice to perfect it." Bottom: Hands gripping the microphone, Senior Nigel Moore sings along with Freshman Cardalina Hernandez. The duo decided to sing together because of their friendship. "I enjoyed singing in front of a crowd," Moore said. "Cardalina challenged me on stage."



Head bowed and right foot pointed, Junior Allyssa Walls sits in a chair. Walls said she practiced her dance to "Feeling Good" by Michael Bublé three times a week." I've decided to perform in the Revue to challenge my skills," Walls said.

Holding out nine fingers, Senior Quintavion Smith shows off his dance moves. Smith participated in the Revue to prove to everyone he can be the best dancer. "I practiced right before the show," Smith said. "I listened to the song repeatedly and basically free-styled."

Staring into each other's eyes, Senior Tilaya Harris and Junior RaShawn Mills sing "Lay Me Down" by Sam Smith. Harris and Mills mutually agreed to perform the "Sam Smith Tribute" because they are both Sam Smith fans. "I performed in the Revue because it was a really good way to finish off my senior year," Harris said "and to be able to work with my best friend hand-in-hand."

Performing her original piece "Pri$e," Sophomore LaAshtiana Ivey plays the piano. Ivey said she spent a few months composing her piece and practiced every day. Ivey decided to perform after many people told her she should broadcast her talent. "I composed this song after losing a close friend from something that could have been prevented," Ivey said. "It's a price I had to pay for it."

Top: With their hands in the air, Sophomore Nia Wells and science teacher Mrs. Patricia Robison dance the Barso Re Megha, a Bollywood dance. "I decided to participate because I love to dance and Mrs. Robison is a fun teacher, so I thought it'd be a great experience," Wells said. Bottom Left: After being announced the winners, Sophomore Tyreak Thomas and world language teacher Mrs. Monica DaCostaGomez hold their Mirror Ball trophies. "We danced in my classroom and the aerobics room every day after school for a week and a half," Mrs. DaCostaGomez said. "Sometimes, we practiced in the morning, too." Bottom Right: Dancing to "Timber" by Pitbull and Ke$ha, Junior Rashawn Mills and English teacher Mrs. Melissa Sickinger execute a dance move called "the whip." "My favorite part of the whole experience was that I really felt like I was on 'Dancing with the Stars'," Mills said. "The way they set it up was very professional."

Judges

"I judged based on technique. I scored kind of hard because of my background in dance."

Senior Cassidy Koontz

"I judged on how they performed, and I scored based on skills and routine."

Business teacher Mrs. Sharon Row

"I graded pretty easy. I was fair, but I mostly scored based on coordination, techniques and their costumes."

Teacher aide Mrs. Yolanda Hogan

Annual competition sees final curtain call

When the curtains closed on the annual Dancing with the MHS Stars in May, it was the final curtain call for the event.

After theatre director Mr. Thomas Mackey called for a change, the three teams of teachers and students competed to show off their dance moves and vowed to win the coveted Mirror Ball.

"Although it is a fun event, it gets harder for people to get involved, so we are going to replace it," Mr. Mackey said.

The news that this would be the last Dancing with the MHS Stars event upset the contestants because they would not receive another chance to compete.

"I was really discouraged because it was really fun. It was my first and last year," Junior Rashawn Mills said. "I won't be able to get that first place."

"It's kind of upsetting because it was my first year, and I wanted to do it next year," Sophomore Nia Wells said. "I'm sure whatever they do will be just as fun for the students and teachers."

The contestants also took the news as an extra incentive to rehearse better.

"We rehearsed on weekends and after school," Mrs. Patricia Robison said. "We had to work around each other's schedules."

Science teacher Mrs. Robison and English teacher Mrs. Melissa Sickinger both have won the competition in the past.

The pressure was on for world languages teacher Mrs. Monica DaCostaGomez and her partner Sophomore Tyreak Thomas to claim first place, and they did.

"It was so fun and nerve-wracking," Mrs. DaCosta Gomez said. "I lost sleep."

Hands on their hips, Sophomore Nia Wells and science teacher Mrs. Patricia Robison perform their second dance of the night. "My favorite part was answering the questions after we danced because I got to be funny and make people laugh," Wells said. Their dance was a '70s disco to the Bee Gees's "You Should Be Dancing."

Mrs. Gail Nicolini

Senior Austin Shea

Sophomore Jaylynn Malone

Sophomore Zachary Dziki

Academic Avenue

Three
to spend
summer
overseas

Senior Sarah Varney

Sophomore Erica Dugue and Junior Angelic Tillman

Junior Marlana De Moraes Emiliano

The journey for three students to participate in Indiana University Honors Program in Foreign Languages was anything but easy.

Sophomore Erica Dugue and Juniors Angelic Tillman and Marlana De Moraes Emiliano began the process in October, 2014, when their skills in grammar, listening and writing were put to the test.

"First, you had to fill out an application with a deadline of November 24. Then you had to wait until January to find out whether or not I got accepted," Dugue said. "From there you either got accepted right off the bat or you had to go through an interview process, and on March 23 you got notified of your final acceptance."

The program costs $7,000 for a seven-week stay with a host family. Dugue and Tillman will visit Brest, France. Emilano will go to Leon, Spain.

"In order to raise money, I signed up with gofundme.com and set up a table inside of Strack and Van Till for three hours and raised $400," Emiliano said.

Emiliano said that she was interested in the trip because she is studying Spanish and wants to become more fluent.

"We watched a presentation of someone who went two years ago, and I always wanted to travel and study abroad, so I applied," Emiliano said.

Tillman said the trip will help her become more independent, prepare her for college and assist her in becoming more fluent in French.

"The thing I want remember from the trip is the people that are going with me," Tillman said. "The host family and learning a whole new world of people who are different from Americans."

MITA offers new opportunities

The Business Department offered certifications from The Microsoft Information Technology Academy, which uses a digital curriculum and allows students the opportunity to earn college credits and enhance their resumes.

"We are one of the first schools in Indiana to pilot this program," business teacher Mrs. Sharon Row said.

The Department of Education (DOE) sent out an e-mail inviting high schools to participate, and one school per region was accepted.

"It took a few weeks for the administration to understand the expectations and goals, but the request to pilot was approved and Mrs. Lorri Covaciu and I went to Indianapolis for training," Mrs. Row said.

Along with Mrs. Row, other business teachers worked with students to prepare them for the program.

First, students take a pretest and then teachers customize the curriculum so that they focus on what students need to learn to earn the certification.

"The test was long but very important. It shows what you didn't know and what you need to learn," Senior Kayla Grant said.

The students develop a skill set in the various Microsoft programs.

The business teachers kicked off the program in January, and students were able to earn Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) and Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA) certification. MOS covers Word, PowerPoint and Excel and optional exams at the master level in Outlook, SharePoint, One Note, Access and Office 365.

Mrs. Row said that since many jobs require the Microsoft certificate, students who possess it will be more likely to get the job.

"It will enable them to secure a good job above minimum wage in a highly competitive technology workforce," Mrs. Row said.

"The certification will benefit me," Junior Jalen Williams said, "in the long run as I go get a job."

By the end of the school year, MHS was number one in Indiana in PowerPoint certifications and number two in Excel certification, Mrs. Row said.

Junior Zack Feign is the only student in the State of Indiana to achieve a perfect score of 1000 on the PowerPoint certification. He is also number three in the State for Excel.

"I was overjoyed. I got up pacing back and forth trying not to freak out," Feign said.

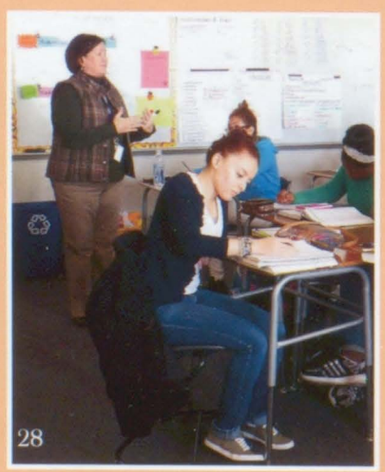
He won a $250 cash prize, a new Surface and a gift certificate. Feign will be entered in the national MOS competition in Florida.

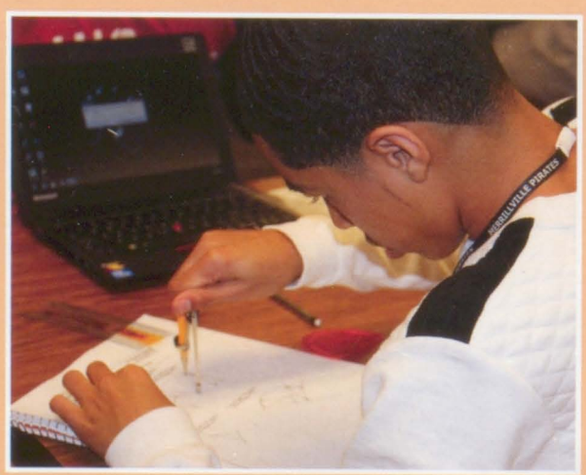
"What a great beginning for our MITA program," Mrs. Row said, "and Zach is an awesome student to represent the school and the State of Indiana."

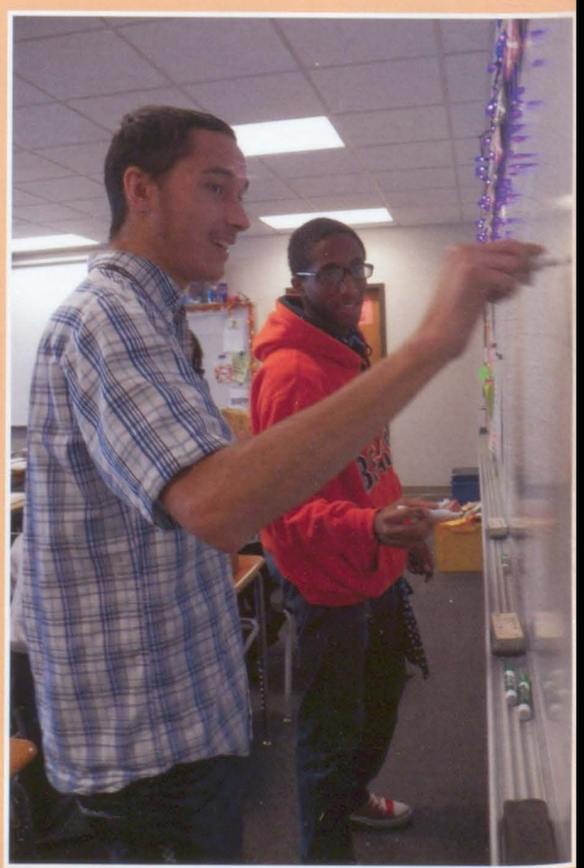
One of four students chosen to participate in the internship program at Methodist Hospital, Senior Chloe Nelson studies pathogens under a microscope. "We rotated in different departments and shadowed different positions, and it was quick-paced and versatile," Nelson said. Internship coordinator Mrs. Sharon Row said she encourages students to take part in career experiences.

Math courses prepare students for their futures

From left to right: As calculus teacher Mrs. Nancy Draper teaches, Senior Adriana Hernandez takes notes. "This class prepares me for college," Hernandez said. "It is also a dual-credit college course." Hernandez said the best part of the class is when she understands the material fully. In his honors geometry class, Freshman Antoine Johnson Jr. uses a compass to rotate shapes. "Geometry is fun and easy," Johnson said. His teacher Mrs. Debra Staffeld said, "The more hands-on, the better the idea of what a rotation is and angles." The concept of rotating shapes is used again in Algebra II. In AP Calculus class, Senior Ashlin Gibson lends a helping hand to Senior Malik Davis. "This class is an excellent class to take for me because more math is always good," Gibson said. "Although people complain about the future use of calculus, I already use this math every day." Gibson plans to pursue computer technology in college, which requires the use of higher-level math such as calculus on an everyday basis.







Learning on location

People often dream of seeing the Eiffel Tower and visiting places such as London, England and France, but thanks to Mr. Robert Bedwell, these dreams became a reality for five students.

During spring break, they traveled to Europe.

"I've always wanted to go to London, so I was really happy to be given this opportunity," Senior Janel Baylor said.

This is not the first time Mr. Bedwell has sponsored a trip like this. He often plans trips for students to tour and see different cities around the world.

"I wanted to give students the opportunity to go out of the country and see different parts of the world," Mr. Bedwell said.

To pay for the trip, the students planned to fundraise by selling candy.

But due to new federal food regulations, Mr. Bedwell and the students had to find other ways to raise money.

This setback did not stop the students from collecting their money for the trip.

"I received a large donation from my pastor at church," Baylor said.

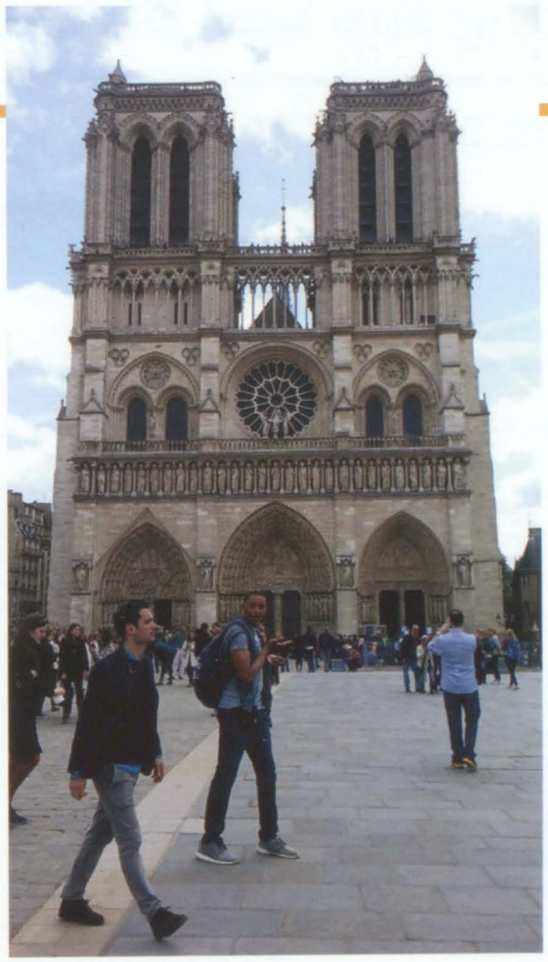
Other students received donations from family members or hosted garage sales.

"I just raised the money on my own, so in the end it all came together," Junior Chanita Allen said.

The main thing the students brought back from the trip was the ability to see and experience what they learned while in history class.

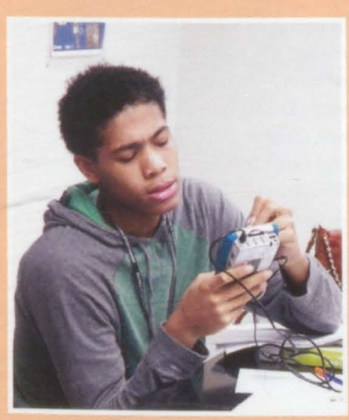
"Everything we saw was just as I had expected," Junior Joshua Hiller said.

"Seeing these things in person was unreal to me," Allen said. "It was truly amazing."



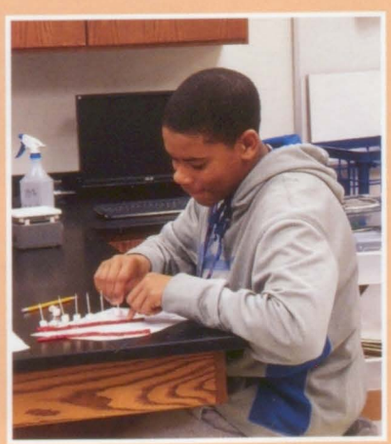
Outside the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, Junior Joshua Hiller waits for 45 minutes to enter. Hiller said he enjoyed the trip, scenery and the places he had visited, including Rome and several sites in Britain. "I feel like this is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I have so many unforgettable memories of places I have never seen before," Hiller said. Hiller said that they visited London and two other cities in England and Caen and eight other cities in France.

Science Department gains access to new equipment



Using Labquest by Vernier Software and Technology, Sophomore Cameron Wilbon graphs the data from Mrs. Ronda Waters' Freezing and Melting of Water Lab. "All I had to do was follow the directions Mrs. Waters gave me and my hypothesis was correct," Wilbon said. Wilbon said he gained knowledge on temperature.

In Mrs. Kristin Cambell's science class, Freshman Michael Shell puts together a DNA strand made out of marshmallows. "I liked that we got to use marshmallows, but it got all over my hands and it was really sticky," Shell said. Shell also explained that the lab helped him understand how to make a DNA strand.



Students used their access to college lab equipment in several classes to expand their scientific knowledge.

Purdue University in West Lafayette participates in a program called Science Express and offered new equipment for students to use this year.

"We used a comparison lab about the equipment in class. The new equipment was much more accurate and there was a lot of feedback about how the students like hands-on activities with the new equipment," Mr. Dave Hinkel said.

Mr. Hinkel and Mrs. Ronda Waters trained for two weeks during the summer. They learned how to use various types of equipment as they worked with college professors.

"It is not difficult to use. They train you pretty well with it. Each day, they taught us how to use new equipment for about one hour each or so, and if you're not completely sure that you're good with it, they will stay and help you," Mrs. Waters said.

The university gave a wide variety of equipment, including gel kits, digital microscopes and pH meters.

"In class, we are able to do more with it. We set it up, use it and have fun, and then we send it back because we only have it for one week," Mrs. Waters said.

Mrs. Waters said that she wishes other students could have the same experiences with the equipment.

"Purdue has given us the ability to advance forward," Freshman Victoria Gromek said, "because we get to learn things others can't, and it can help us explain to them. So it is very beneficial."

Promoting fun and fitness

Physical education teachers strive to make their classes fun and educational.

"Physical education deals with lifetime sports that students can benefit from," Ms. Tricia Lukawski said.
She said watching weight and staying active makes for an easier life.

P.E. teacher Mr. Brian Zdych constantly pushes his students to live a healthy lifestyle.

"Students who work hard toward meeting their fitness goals generally have better self-esteem and feel better about themselves," Mr. Zdych said.

He advises students to diet and exercise regularly in order to achieve a healthy lifestyle.

Advanced Fitness teacher Ms. Amy Govert deals with rigorous training and weight lifting. In class, she teaches students how to improve individual workouts and build muscle mass. For those serious about exercising and being active, Ms. Govert encourages them to set goals.

"One mere push-up or pull-up can make a difference," Ms. Govert said.

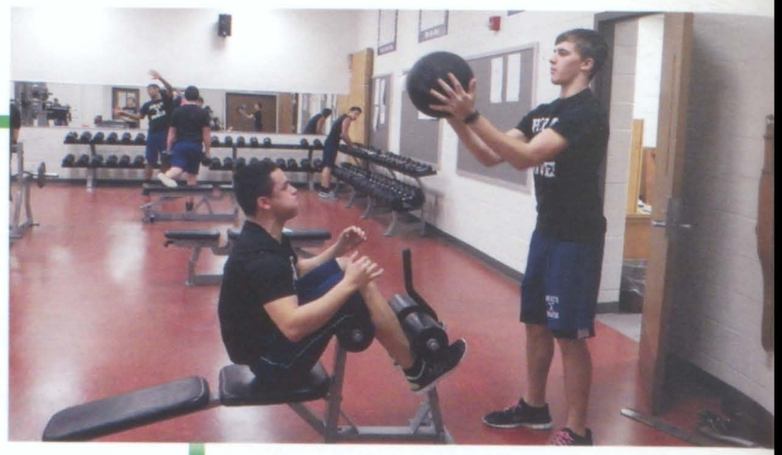
To track student progress, Ms. Govert tests her students on strength at the beginning and end of the course to gauge advancements.

"It's great to see the improvement of a student from their sophomore year to senior year," Ms. Govert said.

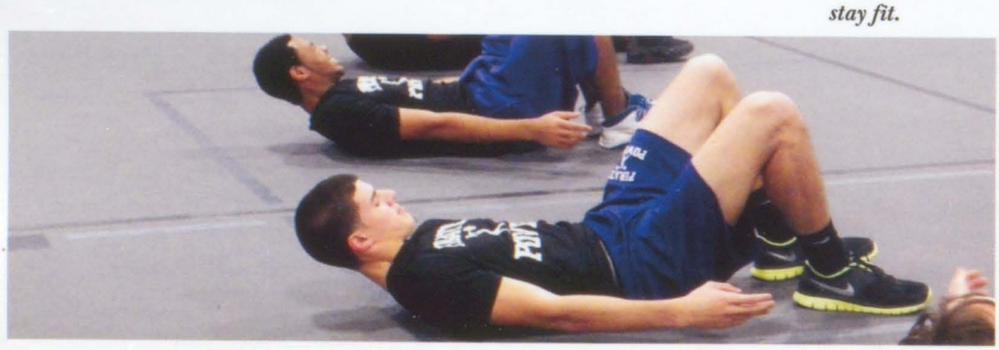
Advanced Fitness is offered for students to take more than once. "Advanced Fitness is a very good class that keeps me on track as far as my fitness goals," Junior Kristin McGee said.

Ms. Govert said she wants students to know that she does not compare them with each other and that everyone can do whatever they put their mind to.

"Advanced Fitness gets students comfortable with lifting weights as they learn proper technique when working out," Ms. Govert said. "Students should stay active and make fitness a part of their everyday lives."

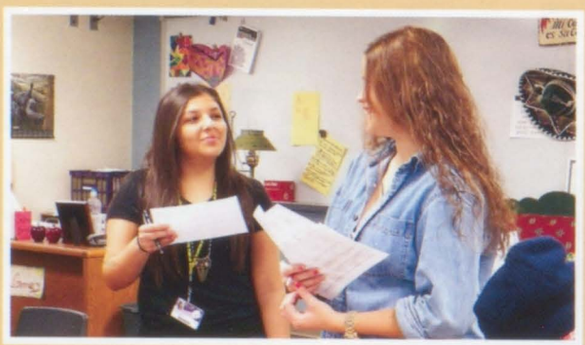


While he sits up to catch the medicine ball, soccer player Senior Arnold Sanchez works on core with Junior Austin Brakley-Lain. "I like weight-lifting and doing squats to keep my legs stronger," Sanchez said, "I'm addicted to working out." Brakley-Lain, a member of the baseball team, said he used the class to stay fit.

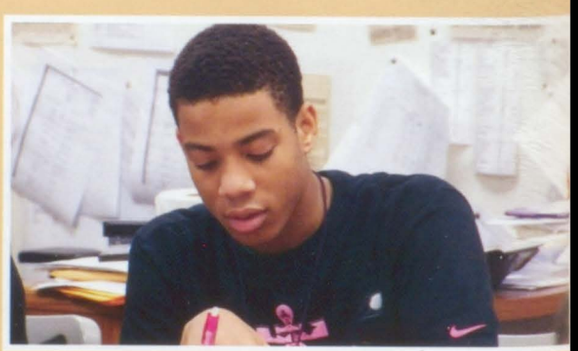


Top: During a free day, Freshman Bryan Fields and Sophomore Israel Williams play basketball. "I like playing basketball the most because it's competitive and the other classes can get involved in it," Fields said. He said that he enjoys free time so he can do his favorite activity. Left: As he lies down on the floor, Senior Andy Murga gets ready to do army winks. "Taking this class and doing the workouts keeps me in shape," Murga said. When Murga was boxing, he said the class helped him to be able to take a body punch.

Heritage speakers take their speaking skills to a new level



To work on their Spanish communication skills, Juniors Jazlyn Martinez and Delaney Richards talk about things they like to do. "Mrs. DaCostaGomez makes us talk a lot so we know how it's supposed to sound instead of us just piecing it together," Martinez said. Martinez is now able to realize how improper her Spanish was before and can now say sentences more fluently in her Spanish 3A class.



In his Spanish 2B class, Junior Charles Jacobs II corrects his homework. "What really helps me in Spanish is that Mr. Maldonado teaches on our level, which helps me better understand the language. We also play games to learn our vocabulary, and it counts as extra credit if we win," Jacobs said. Jacobs chose Spanish because he wants to travel to Mexico and be able to understand and speak the language while he is there.

Learning English challenges students new to the United States

Behind the podium, Sophomore Letica Jimenez presents John Green's novel "Looking for Alaska." "I connected the most with the character Alaska. We share similar views of the world," Jimenez said. "I would recommend this book to a friend because it is heartfelt."

In the first trimester, Freshman Ta-Tiana Gillis works on an essay for Mr. Joseph Monahan's composition class. All freshmen must enroll in three trimesters of English. In the composition class, students write narratives, descriptive essays and persuasive essays.

School can present a special challenge for students whose native tongue is not English.

"They are overwhelmed, afraid, wide-eyed," English as a New Language teacher Ms. Dawn Czuba explained. "They are quiet and fearful."

Some have told Ms. Czuba they are afraid to go into the cafeteria for lunch. She has several strategies to help those students learn English and acclimate to the American culture.

"I will connect those students with some who know multiple languages or who have been in the program," Ms. Czuba said, "even if they just eat lunch together."

Classes present yet another challenge. Imagine trying to learn geography in an unfamiliar language.

"I give teachers a general list of modifications based on the level of English that the student knows," Ms. Czuba said. "Teachers will choose which ones are appropriate to their classrooms."

In addition to equipping teachers with classroom materials and providing word-to-word dictionaries, she said she also tries to connect teachers who teach the same course so that they can share modified tests.

The challenges this year multiplied when 12 students with little or no English registered for classes.

"The number of students we get at this level is usually one or two in a given year. This made for very labor-intensive teaching," Ms. Czuba said.

Students from 33 different countries, as close as Mexico and as far away as Pakistan, are enrolled in the ENL class and three or four other regular classes.

In the ENL classroom, students with no English learn the basics of letter names, letter sounds, blends, phonics and enunciation.

"We practice vocabulary, vocabulary, vocabulary," Ms. Czuba said. "But we also work with them on cultural literacy as well to help them assimilate into our culture."

The ENL classroom is outfitted with textbooks that have age-appropriate stories about issues that affect teenagers at lexiles as low as 100.

The staff of the Media Centers helps by buying age-appropriate texts at lower lexile levels.

"I am not handing them 'Green Eggs and Ham'," Ms. Czuba joked.

In many countries, children learn English as well as the native language, but many students arrive in the United States able to read and write only in their native tongues.

Learning English, as even native English-speaking students know, is difficult.

"In Spanish, one word means many words in English," Junior Enrique Saenz said. "Everything about this language is hard. When Ms. Czuba speaks with me, I understand. Pronunciation is hard."

Saenz came from Mexico along with his fellow classmates Sophomores Kevin Celestino and Andrea Sanchez-Lamas. Celestino said his father emigrated for a better economic opportunity.

"My family stayed in Mexico," Celestino said. "My father and I moved here for his job."

For students like Celestino, the ENL program practices total immersion.

"In a way, this is like being thrown in the deep end of a pool, but this has been shown to be the most effective method in helping students acclimate to their new surroundings," Ms. Czuba said. "The students pick up the English language more quickly, usually becoming conversational within a few months."

The World Languages Department ushered in a new class catering to heritage Spanish speakers.

Language for Heritage Speakers provides fluent Spanish speakers with the opportunity to take this class instead of regular Spanish and learn more about their Hispanic heritage and culture.

The course is designed for heritage speakers who have Spanish in their background and who have demonstrated proficiency in oral and written tests.

"The first unit is about identity. They create presentations and posters about their heritage and culture. The second unit focuses on immigration. After each unit, they have questions to answer," Ms. Esmeralda Palmerin-Zamora said.

"The first unit also addresses immigration issues, border control, job opportunities and social issues. There is also a lot of writing, vocab and grammar."

"We write about our own personal experiences, and we are free to express our own opinion, drawing upon our own experiences," Junior Timisha Ivie said. "For example, we have written about love, immigration reform, citizenship and education. A lot of times undocumented residents don't have the opportunity to enroll in college."

This challenges fluent Spanish speakers to write essays and speak only Spanish in class.

"One benefit is that I'm around students who really care about using the language. A lot of students take it for credits instead of taking it to actually learn the language. It's important to me to learn about my culture and where I come from," Ivie said.

"This is a dual credit class. Instead of Spanish 4, they will take this class. I see this class growing. The students like and enjoy the class and become proud of their heritage," Ms. Palmerin-Zamora said.

During the 2015-2016 school year, Spanish teachers plan to add a Spanish Heritage 2 class and a third one the following year.

"I like how we get to speak more verbally. We actually are able to understand. I also like how we get to watch music videos and learn about other countries. A disadvantage is how much more in detail it gets, and the accent marks are difficult," Senior David Rodriguez said.

Foodies enhance skills

Sophomores, juniors and seniors interested in improving their kitchen skills, especially with cultural dishes, enroll in the Family and Consumer Science Department's Gourmet Foods class.

Ms. Patti Tubbs teaches her students how to make various foods from places all around the world.

"Students learn how to make American, Latin American, French, Italian, African and Asian foods," Ms. Tubbs said. "One of my favorite dishes is the cream puffs. They are made during our French session."

Students were introduced to cuisine from Latin America, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Some of these foods are fried rice, egg rolls, cheese soup, chicken enchiladas, pork tacos and Spanish rice.

"One dish they are making that is new is sushi," Ms. Tubbs said.

Senior A'mauri Erving said she enrolled in the class to learn techniques she can use for holiday cooking and throughout her life.

"I feel it is a great experience to be able to make and try different things because it exposes you to different cultures," Erving said.

Erving said she used the Thanksgiving food techniques as well as the "my plate" strategy, which her family liked the most. Using this strategy, hostesses plan their meals to include foods from all the major food groups, including fruits, grains, vegetables, protein and dairy.

Like Erving, Senior Chloe Stone said she sees cooking as a life skill.

"I can learn more about cooking so I can put it to use to have fun and to eat," Stone said. "It will teach me how to cook for my family and have proper table etiquette."

So that she would not depend on fast food or her mother's cooking, Senior Jayonna Horton said she wanted to expand her cooking skills.

"I don't always have to have that same basic meal because I have tried so many dishes," Horton said. "I told my mom we need to use the 'myplate' more so we could get the right nutrients."

Ms. Tubbs said her goal was for students to do better than last year on presentations. To accomplish this goal, the students now make their own food presentations.

Students agreed the class is a fun and easy learning experience.

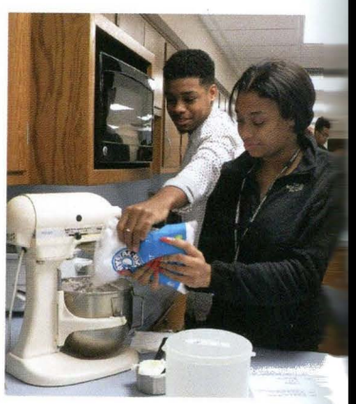
"I chose to take this class because I enjoy food," Erving said, "and I love to cook."

Horton agreed.

"You get to eat good food," she said, "and interact with other peers as well."

For the Christmas season, Sophomore Rico Reed and Junior Brandon Pelaquin make Christmas reefs. "I like learning how to make your own foods," Pelaquin said. They both took Nutrition and Wellness 1.

In a cautious manner, Sophomore Shelby Harmon slowly pours white chocolate over her Chex Mix. "I love the Puppy Chow," Harmon said. "But I hated that green stuff, the Christmas reefs and the caramel corn." Harmon said Holiday Foods was her favorite class she took so far. "I love eating," Harmon said.



In Advanced Nutrition and Wellness, Senior Devin Martin and Sacha Jones make frosting. "I took cooking classes because I want to be a chef," Martin said. Martin also took Nutrition and Wellness 1 and 2 and Cake Decorating. "I liked Cake Decorating because I got to learn different designs," Martin said.

Class gives students a blueprint for their future

Architectural Drafting and Design II taught by Computer Assisted Design (CAD) and engineering teacher Mr. Steve Prather helps students prepare for college and simulate real world problems. The goal is to help them in their future.

"I thought it would be fun and I took other classes before, like CAD I, my freshman year," Senior Richard Witkowski said.

Mr. Prather follows a variety of methods that let the students familiarize themselves with the programs that they use throughout the trimester. The students use a new program called Revit that shows the different ways to construct a house. Revit helps the students by drawing up the floor plans and a 3D image of the house before and after it is built.

"I learn how to build the basics of a house and also a lot about programs like Revit that I never used before," Senior Clarence Johnson said.

Students learn the necessary skills to build their own houses. The class also helps them decide a possible college and career route.

"It's a great program if you're going into a building trade," Senior Marlon Turner II said.

This class gives them real problems to solve. For instance, if one of their rooms isn't built right, they'll have to start over.

Mr. Prather said that while building their houses, it allows them to succeed and helps build confidence.

"You never know what field you're going into, and if you take this class, you'll have some background in drawing and constructing," Junior Adrian Rodriguez said.

Other teachers and students recommend the class to other students because they can learn life skills, and it shows them why their other classes are important, too.

"Just walk into a classroom and explore it," Mr. Prather said. "Talk to the teachers who run it to learn what the class is about."

In an independent study of advanced ceramics, Senior Faith Bonner uses a paddle to smooth out the base of her vase. "You have to be open-minded to what you are doing when creating a project because even if you sketch something out, it won't come out to exactly what you sketched it to be," Bonner said. After completing the base, Bonner focuses on making precise coils and cuts. "Every art class I take, I need an A," Bonner said of her three trimesters with ceramics teacher Mr. Terry Pratt. After 12 hours of work on her vase, Bonner looks at her finished product. "Beauty of art is in the eye of the beholder," Bonner said. Bonner said that she thought her final product turned out beautiful.

Transforming artists

Art is more than just drawing, painting and sculpting. Art requires skills that sometimes may seem hard, until students learn to master them. Art helps students express themselves and gives life new meaning.

"Art for me is creating things that are pleasing to the eye, and you enjoy making it." Senior Faith Bonner said. "What is art if you don't enjoy making it?"

For her senior year, Bonner enrolled in an independent study of advanced ceramics. She worked alongside students in Mr. Terry Pratt's third-hour intermediate ceramics class.

Students enrolled in art department classes also learn drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, printmaking and commercial art.

In ceramics class, Mr. Terry Pratt turns students who are all thumbs or awkward into artists who create with their hands.

"Barring hours of lecture, each technique has unique characteristics and skills that must be mastered through practice," Mr. Pratt said. "Projects are designed to provide a sequential development, practice and mastery of these skills. This is how I teach kids the different techniques in my ceramics class."

In Beginning Ceramics, students create a goblet, pinch pot, mug and a sculpture.

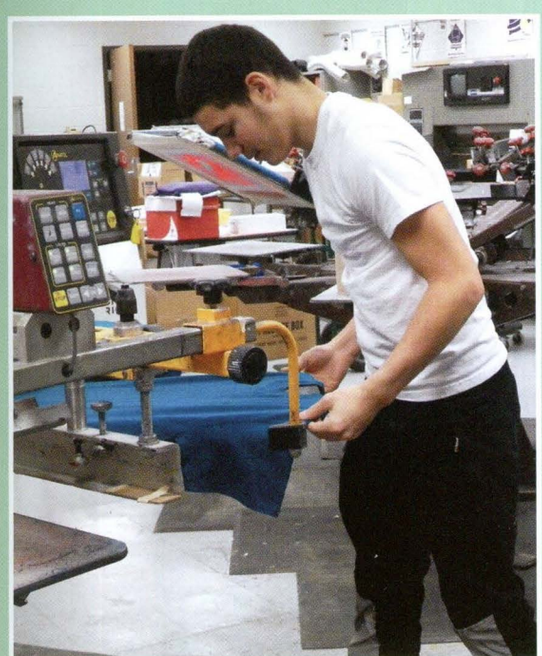
"As the levels grow throughout ceramics, they build on top of each other, like in your math classes. Therefore, a lot of things that we learned in Beginner's Ceramics we took with us to Intermediate and later to Advanced," said Bonner.

Mr. Pratt said students who need help will receive individual instruction and demonstration. He encourages more practice. He noted that today's artists must have an ability to think things through and solve problems in unique ways.

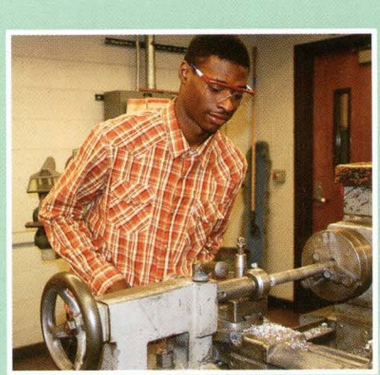
"Each artist differs from each other. What may seem unattractive to one may seem a masterpiece to another," Mr. Pratt said.

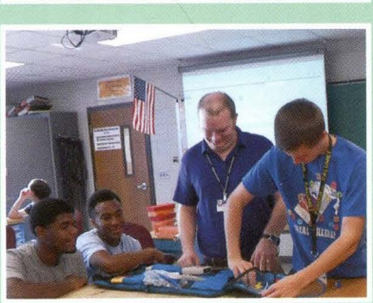
Both Bonner and Mr. Pratt agreed artists share qualities – patience, determination and commitment to one's project. Artists must be opened-minded and unafraid to mess up.

"Students do not begin ceramics or sculpture with developing skills. They must spend the time developing the necessary skills and, most of all, the ability to truly see," Mr. Pratt said. "By that, I mean that most people go through life never actually seeing what is around them. Art teaches students to see color, shapes and forms in new and unique ways."



Left: Adjusting a shirt on the pallet, Senior Austin Shea finishes a project he started in Mr. Dave Teeter's Graphic Arts Production class. He said one of the benefits of taking the class is being able to make good money in the future. "I enjoyed the class. It was real simple," Shea said.
Bottom Right: Senior Dorian Jones and Junior Jourdin Bandy watch as Senior Richard Witkowski helps Basic Electronics teacher Mr. Aaron Longarce take apart a computer. In Basic Electronics, students learn how to solder wires and network computers. "The class helped me know more about the technology today," Witkowski said. Students learn to fix electronics often found in their homes. "Richard was a very bright, quick-learning student and appled himself well to electronics," Mr. Longarce said.





In his Metals B class, Senior Quintavion Smith shapes and smooths a handle for a meat tenderizer. He said he took the class to get another credit and his friends said it would be fun. A benefit of the class is learning to make your own projects. "He (Mr. Garner) taught us how to make a toolbox," Smith said.

Drill team finds key to success

The AFJROTC drill team saw improvement and success.

After 27 students decided to come out, the team began practices five days a week. Members learned the proper marching and standing technique.

"Practices were laid back, but we definitely were able to level it down to get work done," Junior Antonio Cornelius Jr. said.

Senior Master Sergant Daniel Wrasman set a single expectation for the team to place in the top three in all competitions.

"I don't expect our drill team to be the top team at competitions. I just expect them to competitive," Sgt. Wrasman said.

The drill team attended Anchor Bay Drill in Michigan, Scott County High School Meet and Hopkins County Central "Storm Surge" Drill Meet in Kentucky. They won a total of 12 trophies.

Four members won Individual Knockout Ribbons. Sophomore Jorge Luna III took 9th at Anchor Bay. Freshman Kyra Stevens took 2nd and Sophomore Austin Griffith took 10th at Scott County. Freshman Destiny Hernandez took 10th at Hopkins County.

"The season was very rewarding. The most memorable part of the season was when the students saw the trophies. We came a long way. We used to get only get one tropy at each tournament, but this year we had seven teams compete at one and we brought back seven trophies," Sgt. Wrasman said.

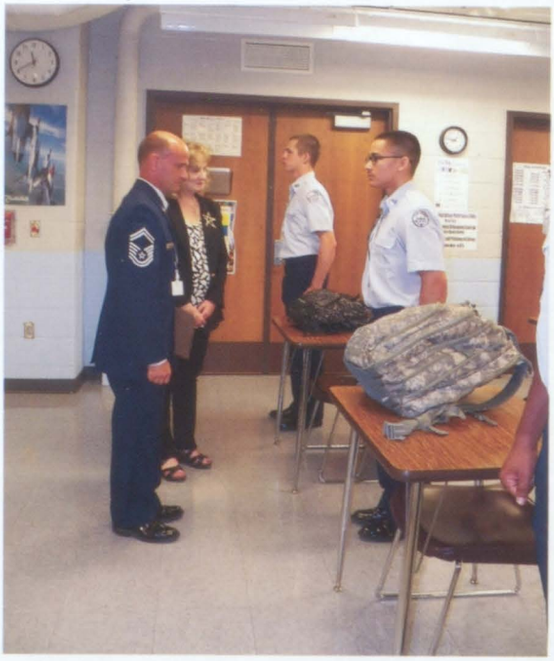
Sergant Wrasman said that he believes the key to their success was the leadership of Cornelius Jr. and Juniors Philip Barnes Jr., Andre' Peterson Jr. and Tammiah Ingram.

"We had some really good leadership. We had good commanders who took charge and expect a lot out of the drill team," Sgt. Wrasman said. "Those four were instrumental."

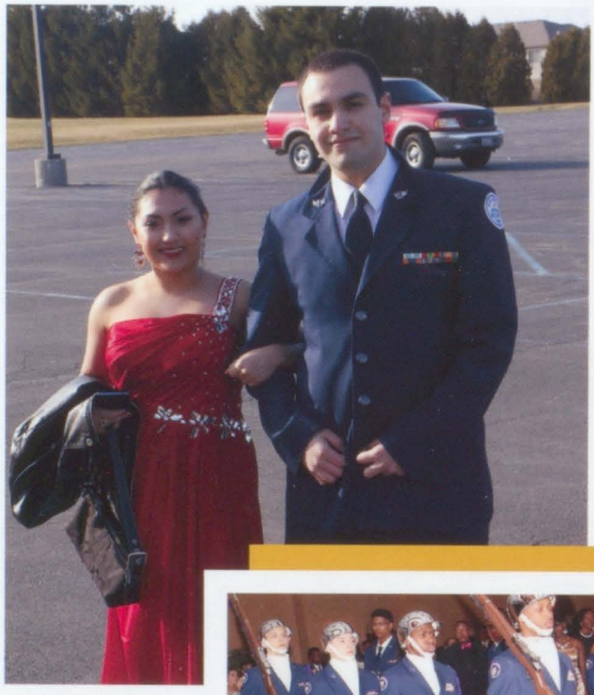
Results

Anchor Bay Drill	
Standard Armed	1st
First Year Armed	1st
Standard Unarmed	1st
First Year Unarmed	1st
Advanced Color Guard	3rd
Inspection	3rd
First Year Color Guard	2nd
Scott County High School Meet	
First Year Inspection	3rd
Hopkins Country Central "Storm Surge" Drill Meet	
Advanced Armed IDR	3rd
Advanced Armed IDR	2nd
First Year Color Guard	2nd
First Year Personnel Inspection	2nd

Before the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery testing begins, Marine Staff Sergeant Douglas Willoughby passes out materials to Senior Brandy Rzepczynski. She was one of 60 students to take the career and personality measurement. "The test can also help narrow a student's career path," Guidance Counselor Mr. Greg Geimer said.



When Indiana's Superintendent of Education Glenda Ritz visits in September, Senior Master Sergeant Daniel Wrasman conducts an inspection of his ROTC cadets, including Seniors Brandon Fassoth and Alex Griffith. Sgt. Wrasman checks if the cadet has shaved, put on a black V-neck and he rest of the uniform correctly, including polished shoes, black socks and aligned gig line.

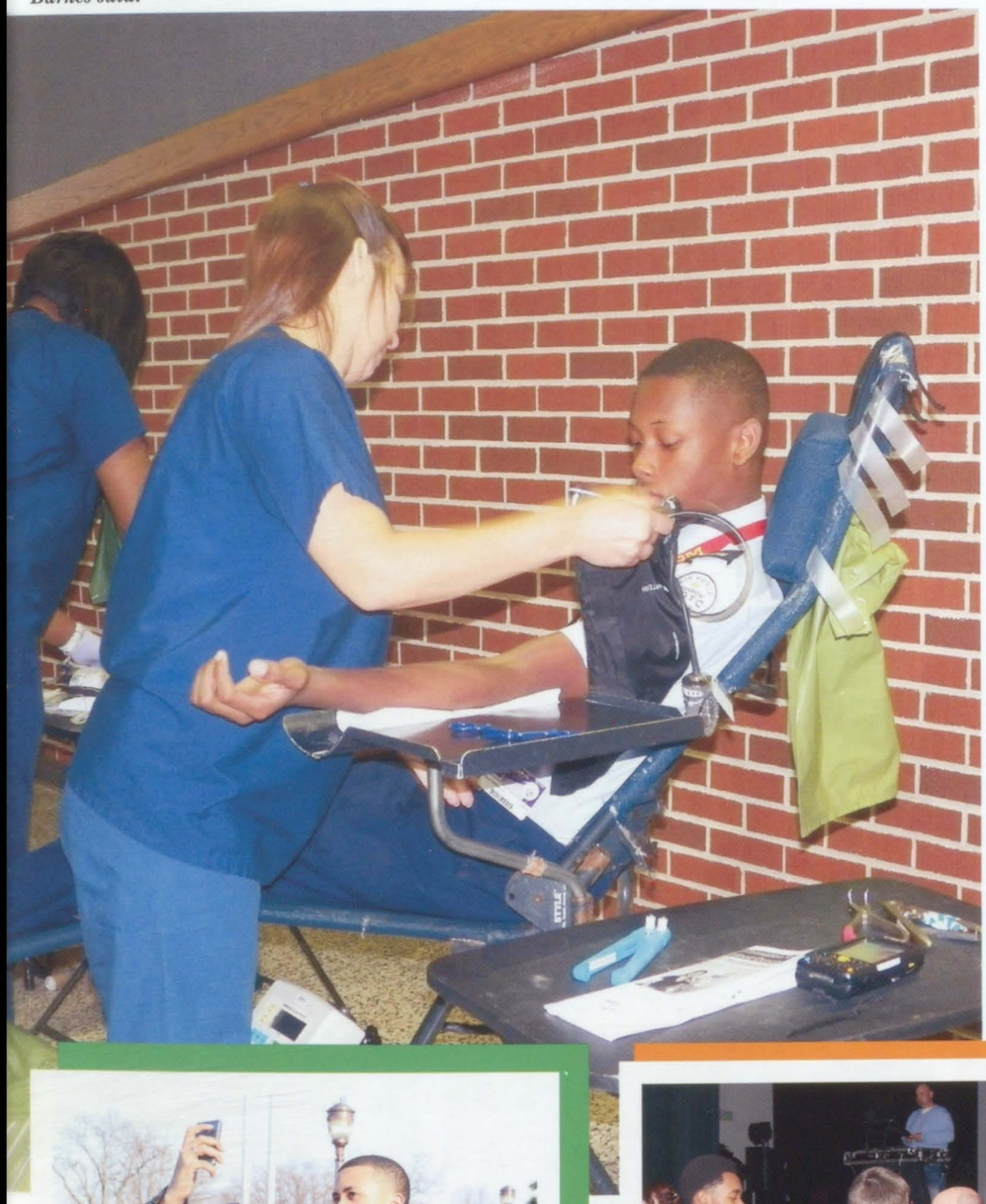


As they walk into the Military Ball, Junior Arturo Velasco poses with his date Junior Sara Ramirez. "The most memorable moment for me was just taking her and having that time with your best friend," Velasco said. He said that being in the program for two years has prepared him for his future military career.

Sophomores Austin Griffith and Jorge Luna III and Juniors Andre' Peterson Jr. and Phillip Barnes Jr. take down the flags after the Military Ball. "ROTC has helped me learn proper etiquette and have more respect from others," Peterson said. "ROTC has taught me how to handle myself in college, military, real life and also interviews."

AFJROTC commits to building better citizens

During the annual ROTC blood drive, Junior Philip Barnes Jr. donates blood to the Red Cross. In his third year in ROTC, Barnes said he wanted to help others in need. "Giving blood to this organization has taught me leadership and maturity," Barnes said.



Three simple goals define the Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp – becoming better students, developing leadership skills and participating in community service.

The academic goal was to have 80 percent of cadets achieve a GPA of 2.0 or higher.

"We try to get them to be better high school students because they will then be more responsible after high school. That's our mission," Senior Master Sergeant Daniel Wrasman said.

Students learned many aspects of active duty military discipline and organization. Every class starts with a military roll call. All cadets stand at parade rest at the side of their desk. When the cadet's last name is called, he or she comes to attention then returns to parade rest.

"Self-discipline starts right in the classroom. Major and Senior get on us and enforce so many military aspects. It really benefits us," Senior Andrew Merced said.

Students participated in physical training on Fridays. Sgt. Wrasman and Major Guy Ramey push the students to always think about getting in better shape.

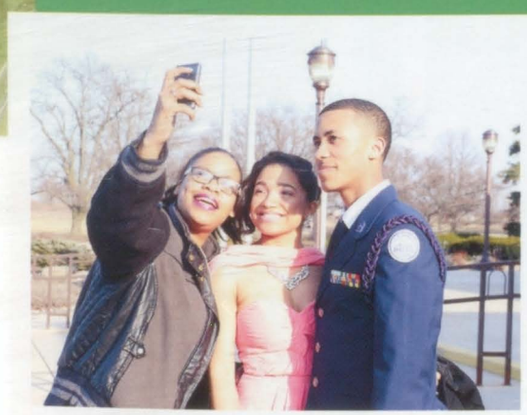
"PT gives us the opportunity to learn how to work out in a group setting. It also encourages us to work out before and after school," Merced said.

ROTC focuses on instilling leadership skills. The Top 6 included Senior Donald Long Jr., Merced, Junior Antonio Cornelius Jr., Junior Dakota Shelton, Junior Brandon Root and Senior Cameron Brooks.

"We look for leadership during all events. There are those leaders who take charge when others need help. We also look for a leader to be able to admit when they need help themselves. Leaders have to be involved and always doing the right thing," Sgt. Wrasman said.

Among the responsibilities of The Top 6 is orgnizing community service. They set a goal to complete 1000 hours of community service. As part of the Adopt-a-Highway program, ROTC periodically goes out and cleans up of Broadway from 68 to 73 avenue.

"Students benefit from community service because they walk away knowing that they are helping out,"Sgt. Wrasman said. "They learn that there are things that you should do for your community even though you don't have to do them."



Looking at his mother Vanessa Voud's phone, Junior Carlos Mejia and his date Junior Haley Funches take a selfie. "The most memorable part of that night was looking into my girlfriend's eyes and slow dancing with her for the first time," Mejia said.

Shaking Sophomore Nathan Potter's hand, Senior Master Sergant Daniel Wrasman stands in the receiving line. "The Military Ball is a military version of Prom or Homecoming, set up for ROTC members," Sgt. Wrasman said.

Band students become *a family*

Marching in line, Sophomore Jalen Adams, Freshmen Gregory Romeo and Joseph Stevenson play their alto saxophones at halftime of a football game. "You have to make sure that your feet are on time and you have to practice," Adams said.

A love of music motivates the band students, who spend hours preparing for marching band and jazz band competitions, playing for a concert and games. The hours they spend together help create a sense of family among the band members.

Their work starts in the summer, when marching band members meet twice a week to prepare their show for football games and festival competitions.

Senior Morgan Lesich said she enjoys band and the musical environment, despite the long hours.

"The marching band typically practices two days a week for two and a half hours, consistently running drills," Lesich said.

"We learn how to work as a group," she said, "and become dependent of each other."

Marching band students participated in three interscholastic festivals and the state marching band festival during the fall. This year, they earned four gold ratings for their Latin jazz show, "A Touch of Bublé." The show featured three songs by pop artist Michael Bublé.

Band director Mr. Mark Danielson said he consults with members and the directors to decide on the show's theme.

"Then I try to decide which music the kids would enjoy playing and our crowd would enjoy hearing," Mr. Danielson said.

Sophomore Marcus Miller said he enjoys the hands-on facets of playing percussion instruments, including frontline bongos, bass drums, mallets and bells.

"I enjoy playing a song with a lot of different parts because that's fun," Miller said.

The marching band show earned a Percussion Achievement Award and two Music Achievement Awards. The three drum majors, Seniors David Lewis, Mitchell Brayfield and Lesich shared the Outstanding Drum Major Award at the Kankakee Valley High School festival.

Later in the year, students participated in the Indiana State School Music Association District Solo and Ensemble Contest. Junior Michael Shannon and Seniors Joseph Twitdy and Lesich advanced to the state contest after winning gold at district. Other band members also earned gold, silver and bronze medals.

Despite the challenges, most band members said their time in band is both memorable and enjoyable.

"Everyone's friendly toward each other," Brayfield said, "and they have your back."

In the holiday concert, Freshman Kayla Josleyn plays the flute. "My favorite part is learning all the different songs," Josleyn said. She also said that the hardest part about band is learning new rhythms.

With the Advanced Band, clarinetist Senior Xayvion Gantt plays in the holiday concert. "My favorite part is definitely being able to perform what you have been working so hard to perfect," Gantt said. "It's a good way to show how far you've come."

As players in the pep band, tuba player Junior Michael Shannon II and clarinetist Senior Mitchell Brayfield perform at the boys' basketball game against Andrean. "We basically play upbeat songs to get the crowd into it," Brayfield said. "Also, it pumps up the basketball team."

In the percussion section, Sophomore Kaja Sims plays in the Advanced Band's holiday concert. "My favorite part of performing is having fun, being with all the people and playing all the instruments," Sims said.

While twirling her flag, Junior Madison Allen dances with the Color Guard in the football halftime show called "A Touch of Bublé." "I liked the dressing up part and performing at halftime," Allen said. "Also, being with all my friends was fun, too."

Playing his clarinet, Freshman Caleb Hiller marches during the halftime show. "Learning your steps was the hardest because you have a lot going on at once," Hiller said. "You have to play memorized music and move around. Sometimes you even have to walk backwards."

Junior Brenna Bell, Senior Huldah Ohiani-Jegede, Senior Morgan Lesich and Senior Lawrence Williams Jr.

Sophomore Isreal Melendez III

Senior David Lewis

Sophomore Allison VanderVilt

Senior Joseph Twitty, Senior Bryan [illegible], Junior Drelen Williams

Senior [illegible] Williams

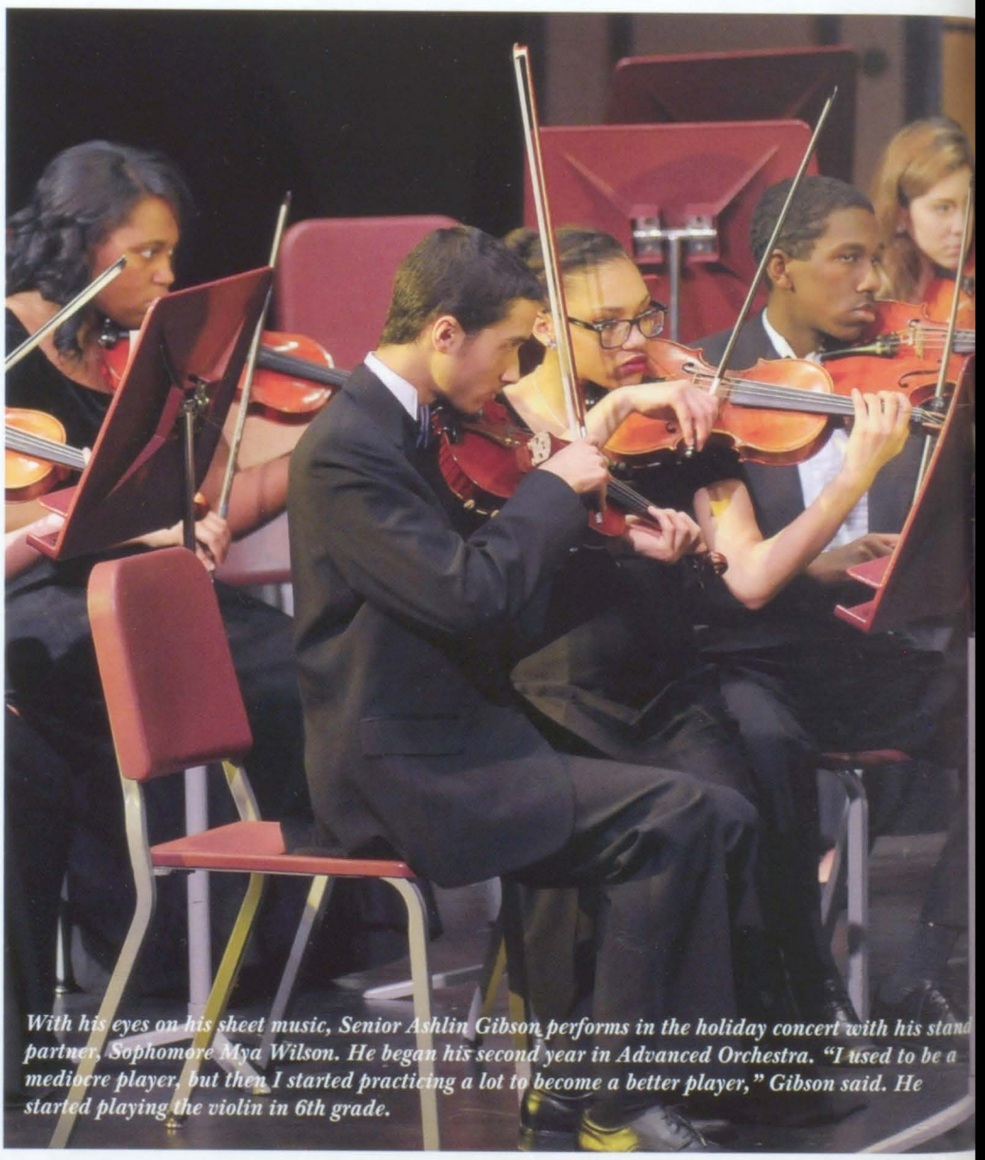
Junior Jada Day

Junior Brian Baran and Sophomore Xavier Madera

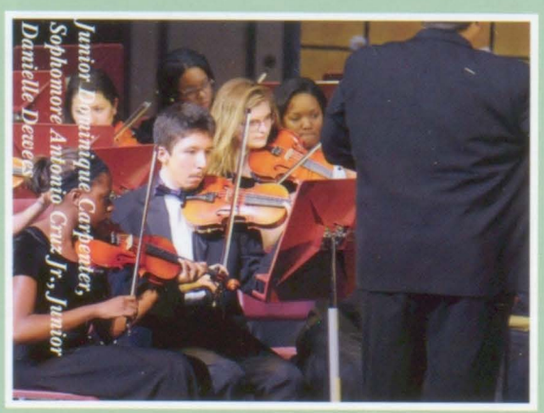
Full orchestra offers *richer sound*

As a first-year Advanced Orchestra player, Junior Eryn Jenkins plays her violin in the holiday concert. "The hardest part was probably staying in tune because there was a lot of moving your fingers around," Jenkins said.

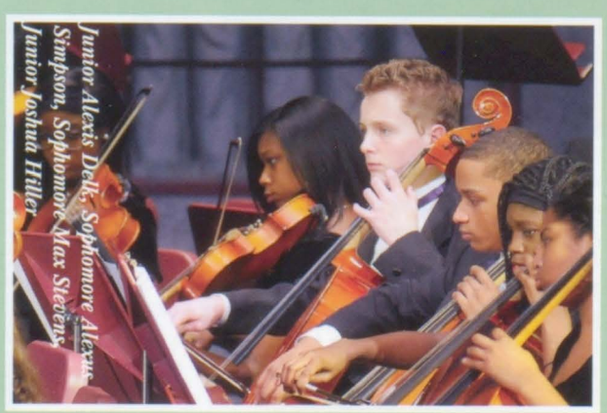
While playing his cello, Freshman William Smith reads from the sheet music. "It feels good," Smith said. "I did a lot of hard work last year to get where I am now." He was one of the two freshmen in Advanced Orchestra.



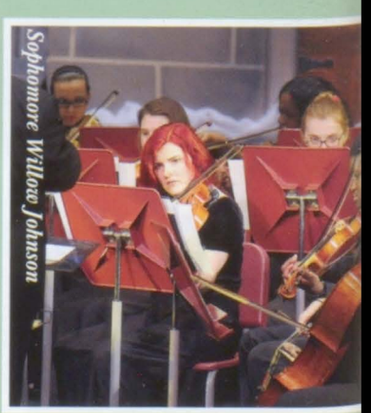
With his eyes on his sheet music, Senior Ashlin Gibson performs in the holiday concert with his stand partner, Sophomore Mya Wilson. He began his second year in Advanced Orchestra. "I used to be a mediocre player, but then I started practicing a lot to become a better player," Gibson said. He started playing the violin in 6th grade.



Junior Dominique Carpenter, Sophomore Antonio Cruz Jr., Junior Danielle Dewey



Junior Alexis Dell, Sophomore Alexus Simpson, Sophomore Max Stevens, Junior Joshua Hiller



Sophomore Willow Johnson

With violins in playing position, Sophomore Anya Johnson and her stand partner, Sophomore Bea Tamo, take part in the holiday concert. "My favorite parts of orchestra are the friends you make and the pieces you learn," Johnson said.

In the holiday concert, Senior Colton Maynard plays the bass. "The hardest part in preparing for the music is the rhythm wise," Maynard said. "Also, we were playing Christmas songs, so you have to play it correctly or people will know it is wrong." Maynard moved up to Advanced Orchestra for the first time during his senior year.

Instead of using the bow, Freshman Ivelisse Taylor plucks the strings of her violin in a movement called "pizzicato." "The hardest part of orchestra is practicing when you don't want to but you know that you have to," Taylor said.

While preparing for the annual Indiana State School Music Association competition and concerts, orchestra members experienced playing in a full orchestra.

Orchestra Director Mr. Jeffery Lang used different methods than previous directors.

"He's the best. I feel like because it's his second year, he has more control and he doesn't have to follow what previous directors set up before," Sophomore Steffan Santiago said.

Mr. Lang introduced students to the facets of a full orchestra.

"A full orchestra includes the main instruments of the violin, viola, cello and bass. It also includes a winds section, brass section and percussion," Senior Emily Gronli said.

Mr. Lang and Band Director Mr. Mark Danielson collaborated in order to bring together the relatively new idea.

"I love full orchestra. It gives a fuller sound and there is more to look at than just the music you hear," Gronli said.

In the Indiana State School Music Association competition, members earned a gold rating.

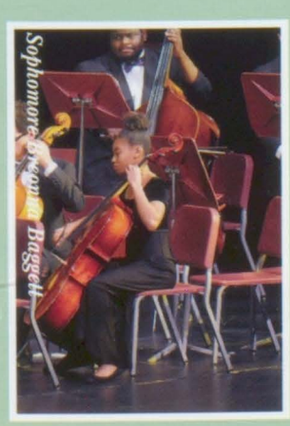
"It went really well. We got a score of 11. I hope we can do better at state," Junior David Hinton II said.

Orchestra members also competed as individuals, as well as ensembles, which can include two to five members. Five soloists and 11 ensemble members advanced to state.

"I was really nervous," Sophomore Mya Wilson said. "But then I started to play and I became confident, and once we got our gold, I was relieved."

Sophomore Alisha Marigold

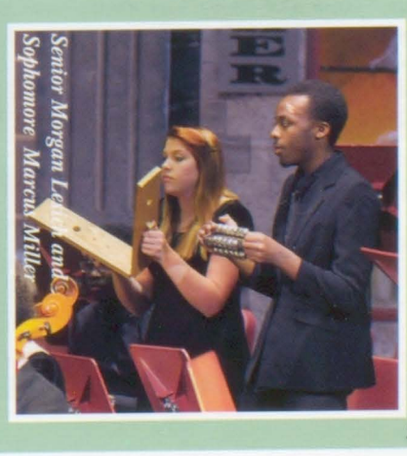
Freshman Crystal Mogg



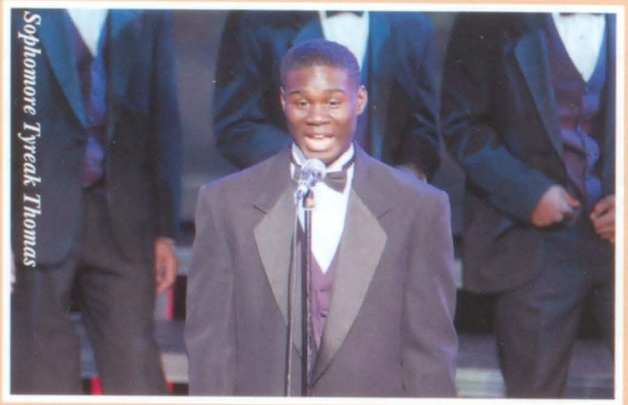
Sophomore Jasmine Baggett

Sophomore Brook Shelby

Sophomore Jaori Fulton



Senior Morgan Le[illegible] and Sophomore Marcus Miller



Sophomore Tyreak Thomas

Senior Cassidy Koontz and Junior Rashawn Mills

Senior Quanisha Vaughn

Choir students practice to perfect

In front of the microphone, Senior Samantha Triplett sings her solo, "Two Front Teeth." "I love the Christmas concert tour," Triplett said. "It was fun to see the kids' looks and how their faces brighten up while we were singing. Some of them even sang along," Triplett said. She loves singing and it is also her favorite pastime. She also prefers when they do choreography because it makes the music better. "This is my last year. I won't do it in college because I won't be under the teachings of Mrs. (Melinda) Reinhart," Triplett said.

"I like the song 'Blue Christmas.' It was different from the rest of the Christmas songs people are used to," Junior Jacob Reinhart said. Jacob is the son of the choir director Mrs. Melinda Reinhart. "I think that she is harder on me than on other students because she is my mom," Jacob said. He began performing in the orchestra. "I became less interested in orchestra and more in choir," Jacob said. "I just started singing publicly a year and a half ago."

At the end their duet, "White Christmas," Senior Nigel Moore kisses Senior Tilaya Harris's hand. "The relationships I formed in choir are the most important to me because they will last past high school," Harris said. Harris has been in choir for two years while Moore started in 7th grade. "I like performing on stage because of the rush I get from everybody watching and I can show off," Moore said. "Mrs. (Melinda) Reinhart taught me how to become a better vocalist," Harris said. "She is one of the best people I met in my short life."

Senior Linda Basemore

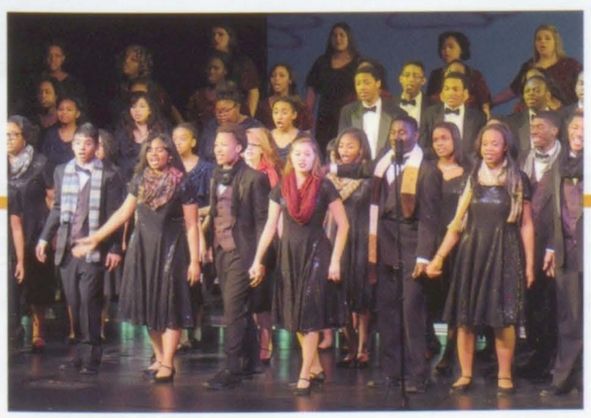
Sophomore Cherise' Higgins

Senior Nigel Moore

Sophomore Cynthia Hindmon

Front and center, Senior Ashley Benkert sings her solo. "Choir always comes first on my priority list," Benkert said. Benkert said she loves to perform on stage and enjoys incorporating dance moves into the music, as they did in the Christmas concert. "I love being front and center on stage," Benkert said. "This is my last year, and I will miss all my choir friends. They were always there for me."

While singing the duet, "Baby, It's Cold Outside," the duo of Senior Cassidy Koontz and Junior Rashawn Mills performs a diagonal and buffalo. "I really liked that song for the Christmas concert. It is really hard to find a song to do that fits in the medley. The song also has not been done in a few years," Koontz said. Koontz has been singing in the choir since elementary school. "I love performing. When you perform, you can play with the audience's emotions and communicate with them," Koontz said. She said that the Christmas concert was her favorite event this year.



The Coral Teens perform at the winter concert.

With their veteran choir instructor, Mrs. Melinda Reinhart, the students spend their time perfecting their vocals and choreographing different routines.

"My favorite thing is the choreography," Senior Rebecca Koeppl said. "When we dance, it is fun to have a partner and learn how to sing better at the same time."

Even with a turnover each year, Mrs. Reinhart said that her team is still as consistent as ever.

"Every year is different," Mrs. Reinhart said, "but we were very consistent because this year, choir students used the seniors last year as an example."

Concerts, local appearances and Indiana State School Music Association competition define the choir's year.

"We prepared with lots of careful practice," Mrs. Reinhart said. "We have a voice instructor that comes in and helps us, so every choir student has opportunities to work on vocal skills."

Mrs. Reinhart also brings in a vocal coach. Students say she spends extra time with freshmen.

"Unlike other teachers," Junior Antonio Cornelius Jr. said, "Mrs. Reinhart wants us to sound professional, like an opera house."

"I am new to choir," Freshman Shianne Woods said. "She (Mrs. Reinhart) helped me sound more professional. My favorite is performing on stage because when we mix in choreography, the songs become fun and easier to learn."

Of the 41 students who competed in ISSMA, the soloists were awarded 23 gold and 5 silver ratings. During the competition, Sophomore Cherise' Higgins received a perfect score, while Senior Tilaya Harris missed by half a point. Sophomore Cynthia Hindmon and Junior Jacob Reinhart were one point away from perfect.

"I was surprised at the judges' comments when he said we had a lot of potential," Cornelius said.

At the state competition, choir members won 19 gold and 2 silver in the solos, and 4 gold and 1 silver in their ensembles.

"In my ensemble, we sang 'Lift Thine Eyes' and 'Set Me as a Seal,'" Senior Kiarah Gamble said. "In choir, I love the way we sound in unison. We are all there for the love of music."

Intermediate Mixed Choir

Director: Mrs. Melinda Reinhart

Front row: Mia Godfrey, Medina Griffin, Angel Collins, Erica Serros, Kiarra Jones, Azjanae Cruz, Heaven Tomlinson, Czaria Freeman, Nicole Hollowell; Second row: Kiarah Carter, Jasmine Martinez-Santa, Heather Herrera, Jasmine Beamon, Olivia Guevara, Molly Murphy, Cara Blanford, Shianne Woods, Tiffany Mason , Kaylah Johnson, Brittanie Lewis; Third row: Cardalina Hernandez, Autumn Kiser, Damione Miller, Tyler Russell, Ferdinand Aton, Michael Johnson II, Brian Moore, Jakobe Wilbon, Aahron Whitehead, Max Govert, Jordyn Bates, Savannah Shirley, Maritza Frazier, Rah'Naysha Boyd; Fourth row: Coretta Bush, Shekirrah Lenoir, Natalie Dye, Gabriel Macapagal, John Grace, Keith Barnard, Christian Glover, George Perosky, Antonio Basemoore, Henry Nelson, Rae-Anne Davila, Cassandra Dildine, Savanah Cox; Back row: Brandon Carpenter, Christopher Ruffin Jr., Dennis Weston, Antonio Brooks, Kejuan Thomas, Ronald Brewer, Brandon Shelton, Isaac Tolliver, Jordan Crook, Airika Buckley, Danielle LeGrand.

Choralteens

Director: Mrs. Melinda Reinhart

Front row: Kiarah Gamble, Tilaya Harris, Marlana de Moraes Emiliano, Ja'Lah Cleveland, Deven Nguyen, Jacob Reinhart, Quanisha Vaughn, Dashanee' Hunter, Lacy Bridgeman; Second row: TasMarie Johnson, Sarah Price, Cynthia Hindman, Shannon Moore, Tyreak Thomas, Arion Walton, Isaiah Davis, Cherise' Higgins, Shareice Jackson, Wynonna Wagonblast; Third row: Nikita Weaver, Scarlett Smith, Justin Smith, Rashawn Mills, Elijah Ray, Nigel Moore, Day'Shoun Robinson, Rebecca Koeppl; Back row: Cassidy Koontz, Ashley Benkert, Antonio Cornelius Jr., Devyn Williams,Samantha Triplett, Charysse James.

Intermediate Choir

Director: Mrs. Melinda Reinhart

Front row: Sierra Jeffries, Ke'Ayzia Holiday, Alexandria Flowers, Hope Wagonblast, Alysha Holley, Alyssia Whiteside, Asia Maynor, Imani Purnell, Samantha Brooks, Alesha Moody; Second row: Marrisa McClelland, Leah Waiters, Anjil Vazquez, Karrington Davis, Patricia Matheny, Terica Bethel, Alexis Henney, Alexia Rainey, Natavia Lenoir; Third row: Ashley Matthews, Jaia Montgomery, Diamond Hampton, Jlah Massie, Sharee Ramsey, Raven Warren, Areiana Whiteside, Yolanda Kelly, Carissa McKinney; Back row: Faith Perry, Vanessa Peluyera, Teresa Vandecar, Maryanne Turcotte, McKinzie Dalton, Breanna Phillips, Elizabeth Wilck, Brianna Rangel.

Beginning Orchestra

Director: Mr. Jeffrey Lang

Front row: Lacey Davis, Emmalee Colwell, Dulce Cuazitl, Angela Pejovski, Linyhia Meux-Miller; Second row: Damari Ramos, Tori Holst, Cecilia Irizarry, Kennedy Tanniehill, Viviana Lagunas, Stephanie Puente, Shaina Williams, Taelor Hill, Brendea McNeal; Third Row: Asia Gray, Katelyn Vinson, Madison Bullock, Monique Guydon, Jada Edwards, Ti'Mair McMullan, Adrianna Rietman, Taylor Ballard, Kinnedi Davis, Oscar DeLa Cruz; Fourth row: Zyriek Nickson, Jacob Cabrera, Tatiana Peters, Kayla Miller, Brianna Jones, Jhonae' Garmon, Olivia Taylor, D'Angelo Brown; Back row: George McClendon III, Matthew Spicknall, Brandon Scott, Akilah Ware, Cayla Jenkins, Kyle Noonan, Ronald Woods, Justin Kiel. Not pictured: Jasmine Collins, Rosario Contreras.

Intermediate Orchestra

Director: Mr. Jeffrey Lang

Front row: Carly Gubitz, Chadryne Tamo, Heather Osorio, Ireon Smith, Jannel Boyd; Second row: Ivory Jones, DeAndrea Mitchell, Ivori Fulton, Rachel McChristian, Courtney Taylor, Tatyanah Cross, Ahveyon Williams, Courtney Chávez, Emily Lesich; Third row: Devon Bailey, Cryst'n Morgan, Lauren Stanley, Janae' West, Alisha Mongold, Madison Blackwell, Danielle Dewees, Morgan Brinker; Fourth row: Destiny Washington, LaAshtiana Ivey, Aunteria Howard, Samia Henley, Brianna Raketic, Briyauna McNeal; Back Row: Jonathan Tucker, Justin Turner Jr., Juan Adame, Joesph Harris, Tyler Jassso, Torian Bryant. Not pictured: Joshua Hiller, Natalie Paz.

Advanced Orchestra

Director: Mr. Jeffrey Lang

Front row: Melissa Brayfield, Aaliyah Smith, Hope Krajnak, Claribell Quninones, Almanoemi Acosta, Kathleen Aton; Second row: Dae'Ja Pinkins, Anna Davis, Vanessa Yanez, Timoya Bryant, Mya Wilson, DaJaNay Askew, Maryam Ali, Eryn Jenkins, Mariana Cantu, Gia Sadural; Third row: Justin Hinton, Mya Griffin, Emily Glover, Asianna Peterson, Cynequa Cross, Matthew Hill, Victoria Frey, Emily Gronli, Breonna Baggett, Fourth row: Steffan Santiago, Alonzo Brown III, Fabienne Laurisch, Hannah Duran, Willow Johnson, Meagan Mays, Jakobe Edmond, Emily DeCausemaker, Back row: Ashlin Gibson, David Hinton II, William Smith.

Intermediate Orchestra

Director: Mr. Jeffrey Lang

Front row: Khalia Sanchez, Alana Charles, Ashlei Hunt, Grettel Peralta, Brenda Garcia, JaeLenn Johnson; Second Row: Isobel Collins, Joshel Richards, Tiffany Holst, Ivelisse Taylor, David Rosa, Jazzybell Quinones, Dale Holley, Bethany Rochefort; Third row: Deion Charleston, Anya Johnson, Brook Shelton, Alexus Simpson, Angela Terry, Alexis Delk, Anthony Turner; Fourth row: Elijah Coy, Jada Johnson, Christian Luckett, Moniel Sanders, Brittney Cain, Haley Funches, Dominique Carpenter, Aleecia Niezgoda; Back row: Cezar Hernandez, Darrel Glass II, Sydney Sheppard, Lauren Pryle, Antonio Cruz, Mahqueese McMillan, Terry Sabbath, Maxwell Stevens.

Advanced Band

Director: Mr. Mark Danielson

Front row: Arianne Conn, Shania Blue, Serena Thormann, Yvonne Luna, Erica Dugue, Brianna Brown, Samantha Keith, Laura Bier, Jalen Adams, Makayla Hollingsworth; Second row: Mr. Danielson, Vanessa Bush, Kalea Jackson, Breshaye Spear, Daiyon Bryant, Madison Ross, Jada Day, Jennifer Villanueva, Morgan Lesich, Xavier Madera, Kaja Sims; Third row: Joseph Twitdy, Kyrah Pirtle, Allison Vanderbilt, Huldah Ohiani-Jegede, Marguerite Culbreath, David Walls, Keith Baker Jr., Brandon Mizanin, Drelen Williams, Aaron Woodson, Iziah Readus, Mitchell Brayfield; Fourth row: Emmanuel Willis, Julian Bell, Lawrence Williams Jr., Morgan Harris, Taylor Cazy, Israel Melendez III, Jahnari Pruitt, Isaac Graham, Justin Patton, Gerald Akujobi Jr., Nana Asabere; Back row: Adrian Brooks, Brenna Bell, Marcus Miller, Ethan La Belle, David Lewis, Henry Holzwarth, John Ohiani-Jegede, Michael Shannon II, Ashiala Jackson, Jonathan Lipp, Milan Trajkovski, Cornelius Sanders Jr.

Beginning Band

Director: Mr. Mark Danielson
Front row: Jansen Tan, Camdoen Martin, Asha Kizer, Karla DeLeon, Kennedy Cole; Second row: Noah Bradley, Kristyn Rogers, Angelica Knox, Kayla Hudson, Jessica Gamble, Carrington Morse, Mr. Danielson; Third row: Kayla Josleyn, Daniela Waiters, Adalberto Acosta, Keylian Brown, Sabrina Thormann, Alanna Bankhead, Kyle Semmes; Fourth row: Cameron Figueroa, Matthew Alleyne, Cole Frey, Sarah Thormann, Khayla Harris, Gregory Romeo, Cameron Woods, Erin Sims; Back row: Caleb Hiller, Edmund Gunn Jr., Joseph Stevenson, John Sawyer, Mik'el Mays, Timothy Porter IV, Preston Shirley.

Jazz Band

Director: Mr. Mark Danielson
Front row: Serena Thorman, Sabrina Thorman, Kristyn Rogers, Morgan Lesich, Adalberto Acosta, Keylian Brown, Second row: Xavier Madera, Huldah Ohiani-Jegede, Lawrence Williams Jr., Gregory Romeo, Emmanuel Willis, Noah Bradley; Third row: Mr. Danielson, Brenna Bell, Mik'el Mays, Gerald Akujobi Jr., Kayla Josleyn; Back row: Kaja Sims, Milan Trajkovski, Michael Shannon II, John Ohiani-Jegede, Isaac Graham.

Intermediate Band

Director: Mr. Mark Danielson
Front row: Mr. Danielson, Derrick Taylor, Devin Hence; Second row: Isaiah Taylor, Tyler Carlisle, Larissa Hart; Back row: Jaron Woods, Nathan Fles, Donyel Borom.

AFJROTC Top 6

Sponsors: Maj. Guy Ramey, SSgt. Daniel Wrasman
Front row: Andrew Merced, Brandon Root; Back row: Antonio Cornelius Jr., Dakota Shelton, Donald Long Jr., Cameron Brooks.

AFJROTC Color Guard

Sponsors: Maj. Guy Ramey, SSgt. Daniel Wrasman
Front row: Ah'Sia Parker, Andre' Peterson Jr., Kyra Stevens; Second row: Isaac Caballero, Philip Barnes Jr., Jorge Luna III, Nehemiah Nunnery; Third row: Michael Hollowell Jr., Le'Anna Scott, Tammiah Ingram; Back row: Austin Griffith, Antonio Cornelius Jr., Carlos Mejia, Preston Shirley.

AFJROTC Drill Team

Sponsors: Maj. Guy Ramey, SSgt. Daniel Wrasman
Front row: Destiny Hernandez, Elgin Prewitt, Regenea Riley, Ah'Sia Parker, Michael Hollowell Jr., Philip Barnes Jr.; Second row: Yolanda Kelly, Isaac Caballero, Jorge Luna III, Nehemiah Nunnery, Kennedy Marshall, Donald Long Jr., Kyra Stevens; Third row: Andre' Peterson Jr., Dajon Newton, Tammiah Ingram, Tynithia Robinson; Back row: Austin Griffith, Christopher Hendrix, Antonio Cornelius Jr., Brandon Root, Carlos Mejia.

AFJROTC Physical Training Team

Sponsors: Maj. Guy Ramey, SSgt. Daniel Wrasman
Front row: Ceana Escalante, Elgin Prewitt, Andre' Peterson Jr., Ah'Sia Parker; Second row: Yolanda Kelly, Jorge Luna III, Nehemiah Nunnery, Donald Long Jr., Philip Barnes Jr.; Third row: Vernice Eastland, Benjamin Worthington, Dajon Newton, Tammiah Ingram; Back row: Max Benkert, Alexander Griffith, Antonio Cornelius Jr., Austin Griffith, Carlos Mejia.

Senior Tierney Cook

Mr. Thomas Mackey III

Senior Megan Clarkson and Senior Leon Kallert

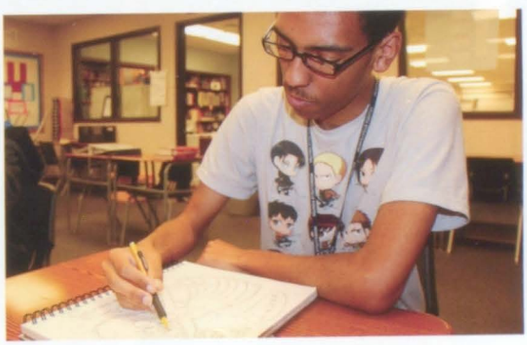
Senior Quanisha Vaughn

Club Court

Behind the scenes of an artist

Sophomore Illaha Abdul

Senior Israel Akinbobuyi



Senior Julian Andrews

With a passion for art and designs, Senior Art Club members Julian Andrews and Israel Akinbobuyi started from a blank canvas to begin their journeys in art.

Andrews began his path as an artist when he started to create comics during his middle school years.

"Having people come up and ask when the next chapter was coming brought a smile to my face and inspired me to do more and be the best I can be," Andrews said.

Andrews had acquired a skill for drawing but still saw that he had room for improvement and wanted to learn new methods.

"I would go to different websites, like Tumblr, and see other people's drawings. I wanted to try their techniques out and fuse them with my own," Andrews said.

Inspiration doesn't always have to come from others across the Internet. It can come from those at home.

"When I was a kid I looked up to my older brother," Akinbobuyi said. "He would sit down at the table and start to draw, so I picked up on that and did the same."

Akinbobuyi followed in his brother's footsteps and others encouraged him to develop as an artist.

"My mother told me I was good and this inspired me to go forward and keep drawing," Akinbobuyi said.

Both students said they felt comfortable joining the Art Club because they love art.

"I'm not the brightest and I'm not athletic. Drawing is all I really have, and drawing is what makes me really happy," Andrews said. "It makes me feel good."

Student Government Officers

Sponsor: Ms. Samantha St. Aubin
Front row: Alice Canchola, Mariana Cantu; Back row: Princess Graham, Humberto Sanchez, Meagan Clarkson.

Peer Mediators

Sponsor: Mrs. Veronica Maldonado
Front row: Marissa Collins, Emily Gronli, Jacqueline Pollard; Back row: Yiqi Duan, Arion Walton, Mrs. Maldonado. Not pictured: Viridiana Carrillo.

Student Government

Sponsor: Ms. Samantha St. Aubin
Front row: Alice Canchola, Mariana Cantu, Humberto Sanchez, Meagan Clarkson, Princess Graham; Second row: Sara Ramirez, Kora Bramson, Marissa Collins, Maria Carbajal, Cynthia Basu-Chavez, Viridiana Carrillo, Allanisette Dawson; Third row: Ms. St. Aubin, Alonna Traylor, Alicia Frazier, Alexis Anderson, Ke ara Gill, Rahma Safraoui; Forth row: Moniel Sanders, Quiana Moorehead, Halina Duke, Alonzo Garcia, Austin Shea, Patrice Jenkins; Back row: Tynithia Robinson, Tyhlar Sain, Lakiima Wingard, Keaireana Moorehead, Juan Padilla.

To help with the annual Crush Can Fundraiser, Senior Meagan Clarkson reviews the content of the cards. The money raised from selling the Crush Cans funds the Homecoming and Goofy Games each year. "I joined Student Government because it's a good way to help out the community and be involved in school with friends," Clarkson said. "I loved the bingo night at the local nursing home because I got the chance to interact with them, and I love old people."

As he sorts items for the Food Drive, Senior Humberto Sanchez checks the expiration date on each can. "It's a great event," Sanchez said. "I think it's a way to show you care for our community, and it's a great way to work together as a group."

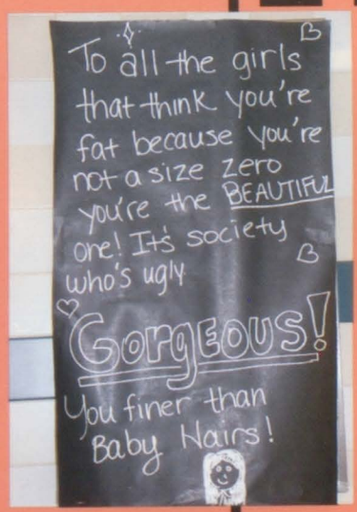
Socially Together and Naturally Diverse

Sponsors: Mrs. Beverly Van Drunen and Ms. Heather Pocock
Front row: Angelica Navarro, LaAshtiana Ivey, Ashley Mendez, Ashton Anekwe, Naphtalia Ruth, Khandi King, Kianna Reed, Christian Espino, Johnathon Arce; Second row: Ms. Pocock, Monique Guydon, Madison Bullock, Jada Edwards, Tatiana Peters, La'Deja Rand, Tiarra Jones, Rachel Rodriguez; Third row: Mrs. Van Drunen, Carly Gubitz, Tatyanah Cross, Alyssa White, Andrew Merced, Xandria Harrison, Ashlyn Robinson, Arkayla Jones; Fourth row: Clarissa Haro, Edward Quintero, Brandy Hughes, Halina Duke, Tylar Sain, Brianna Jones, Aliyah Robinson; Back row: Viridiana Carrillo, Gildardo Quintero Jr., Samia Henley, Mekhayla Gibson, Alexander Navarro, Louis Rand, Alivia Ash.

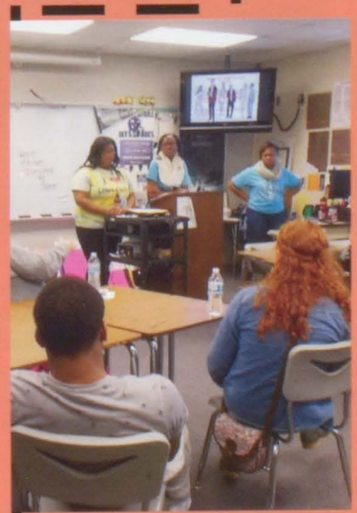
Peer Helpers

Sponsor: Ms. Grace Dewald
Front row: Khandi King, Briante Rodgers, Alesha Moody; Second row: Tajia James, Brianca Murphy, Tynithia Robinson, Tyhlar Sain; Back row: Cameron Brooks, Robert Jackson, Johnnie Rivera Jr.

On the mirror in a girls' bathroom hangs a poster put together by members of Socially Together and Naturally Diverse (STAND) to increase awareness of internal bullying. "The idea came from 2014 alumna Cassie Govert. She brought the idea to STAND after she saw it on a college campus," STAND's Director of Leadership Naphtalia Ruth said. The same week STAND sponsored Pay it Forward. It was similar to the mirror concept, but it allowed students to pass compliments to their peers.


To all the girls that think you're fat because you're not a size zero you're the BEAUTIFUL one! It's society who's ugly
Gorgeous!
You finer than Baby Hairs!

During the Martin Luther King Day Workshop, Junior Brandy Hughes describes rape culture to participants. Hughes explained the severity of rape culture and cautioned people to always be aware of their surroundings. "The workshop went well. I was able to express my own opinions about rape culture," Hughes said. "The students had a lot of questions and felt comfortable enough to tell me about their past."



Junior Freshman Mentors

Sponsor: Mrs. Rae Lopez

Front row: Sara Ramirez, Claribell Quinones, Imani Purnell, Crystal Lopez de Lara, Jacqueline Gutierrez, Eryn Jenkins, Monique Yarbro, Haley Funches; Second row: Viridiana Carrillo, Dominique Carpenter, Selena Drake, Drelen Williams, Xakilah Williamson, Jomaria Burns, Mary Ann Wallace, Erika McClinton; Third row: Briana Abbott, Hunter Kaiser, Ashton Anekwe, Kaila Byers, Jacob Covaciu, Anthony Brown; Back row: Ashley Ojo, Dalin Tape, John Unmisig, Isaiah Thornton, Antonio Cornelius Jr., Chelsey Primm.

Senior Freshman Mentors

Sponsor: Mrs. Rae Lopez

Front row: Raina Robinson, Mikayla Harmon, Marissa Collins, Candace Howard, Cynthia Basu-Chavez, Camari Riley, Da'Ja'Nay Askew, Surrae Robinson; Second row: Reesie Woods III, Yiqi Duan, Tilaya Harris, Cassidy Koontz, Serina Ford, Briante Rodgers, Bianca Murphy, Andrew Merced, Morgan Lesich, Andres Nunez, Maryam Ali, Isis Nash; Third row: Quanisha Vaughn, Darshawn Woodard, Moniel Sanders, Amber Dawning, Jenna Jurczyk, Kayla Grant, Ashley Benkert, Huldah Ohiani-Jegede, Naphtalia Ruth, Terrance Grayson, Christopher Newman, Angelica Navarro; Fourth row: Gregory Vega Jr., Arnold Sanchez, Bradley Salka, Johnathon Arce, Dominique Brown, Chloe Nelson, Anna Feliciano, Jaz Talley, Devin Martin, Cameron Brooks, Andres Carrillo, Christian Espiño; Back row: Montriel Shell, David Lewis, Victoria Gaines, Xayvion Gantt, Jairus-Michael Perry, Jeremy Herrod, Anthony Green Jr., Di'jonte Davis, Jordan Baldwin, Kenneth Moore, Vejer Cox, Michael Johnson II.

Facilitators impact students' relationships

Sitting at a local restaurant, Director of Diversity and Student Support Services Mr. Danny Lackey and three alumni Byran Popa, Ricardo Hernandez and Mrs. Beverly VanDrunen, created the program called IMPACT Day. They came up with the idea for IMPACT Day from an American reality television series called "If You Really Knew Me." The program started five years ago. There is an IMPACT Day once every trimester.

The main goal is to break down barriers between students and show them they have more things in common with each other than differences.

"We just felt like students needed a place to shed their typical roles in the school and talk to kids they wouldn't normally talk to," Mr. Lackey said.

When selected to participate in IMPACT Day, students spend the day in the Hall of Flags with 100 of their peers. Teachers from the high school and other Merrillville community schools are invited to attend.

"My favorite part was the mini-games we played, like Move Your Butt," Sophomore Allison Vanderbilt said.

The students and teachers were divided into small groups. The groups were led by handpicked students who go through special facilitator training before IMPACT Day.

"IMPACT Day made me realize I want to be a social worker," facilitator Senior Angelica Navarro said. "Some people just need someone to trust and talk to because sometimes that's all you need."

Participants and facilitators said they believe IMPACT Day has help to create a better environment.

"I feel like it improves the overall climate by improving student to student relationships and student to teacher relationships," Mrs. VanDrunen, who now works at MHS and sponsors IMPACT Day said. "We focus on the commonalities between students, not the differences."

Impact Day Facilitators
Sponsor: Mrs. Beverly Van Drunen
Front row: Mrs. Van Drunen, Viridiana Carrillo, Haley Funches, Casey Harvey, Ashley Mendez, Shana Sams; Second row; Gildardo Quintero Jr., Charity Gilkey, Kianna Reed, Christian Espino, Angelica Navarro, Cameron Brooks; Third row: LaAshtiana Ivey, Naphtalia Ruth, Ashton Anekwe, Johnathon Arce; Back row: Carlos Mejia, Tyreak Thomas.

Ending their dance, Facilitator Senior Colton Maynard and his group show the IMPACT Day sign. "The sign is a way of saying you understand where they are coming from, like I feel you," Maynard said. Facilitators use the sign to show comfort to a person without physically touching them.

Dressed as Crazy Eyes from "Orange is the New Black," Senior Camille Ochoa passes out candy at the Treats on Track event hosted by the Merrillville Pirate Athletic Council. "I loved it. I enjoyed giving candy out to the kids. It was a night to give instead of get," Ochoa said. "It was nice seeing them get so happy for free candy."

Athletic Trainers
Sponsor: Ms. Susan Hayes
Front row: Alice Canchola, Mariana Cantu; Back row: Jomaria Burns, Kayla Grant, Angelica Navarro.

Merrillville Pirate Athletic Council
Sponsor: Ms. Janis Qualizza
Front row: Keristen Lucero, Michael De La Peña, Robin Townsend, Kayleigh Champion, Michael Robinson, Amber Dawning; Second row: Kathryn Jurczyk, Terrance Grayson, Gregory Vega Jr., Chloe Nelson, Hannah Sawyer; Back row: Morgan Harris, Derel Shell, Hunter Kaiser, Darius Kendall, Victoria Gaines.

Spanish Club

Sponsors: Ms. Esmeralda Zamora and Mrs. Monica DaCostaGomez
Front row: Edward Quintero, Juan Juarez, Raina Robinson, Johnathan Arce, Humberto Sanchez; Second row: Gildardo Quintero Jr., Angelica Navarro, Robin Townsend, Viridiana Carrillo; Back row: Timisha Ivie, Gregory Vega Jr., Andres Carrillo, Alexander Navarro, Ms. Zamora.

At the Spanish Club and French Club potluck, Spanish Club Sophomores Leah Ray and Halina Duke eat authentic Mexican food. "I like the sponsors, Mrs. DaCostaGomez and Ms. Zamora, and I also like the field trips we get to go on and events like the potluck," Duke said. This is Duke and Ray's first year in Spanish Club.

French Club

Sponsors: Ms. Irene Spiro and Mrs. Melissa Byerly
Front row: Jenna Ducret, Crystal Lopez-de-Lara, Marrisa Ramos, Mam Samba, Amy Harsma; Second row: Aubren Rosas, Ralaunda Bradshaw, Victoria Frey, Kayleigh Champion, Melissa Brayfield; Back row: Ms. Spiro, Amber King, Michael Shannon II, Andrea Fernandez, Mrs. Byerly.

Members of the French Club pay tribute to the victims of Je Suis Charlie in posters and t-shirts.

French Club remembers victims

On January 7, 2015, Je Suis Charlie, (Charlie Hebdo) a weekly French newspaper, was the target of terrorism. Terrorists stormed the Paris newsroom and 11 people died. French Club Sponsor Ms. Irene Spiro and her French Club students paid tribute to this tragedy by creating Je Suis Charlie t-shirts. The Je Suis Charlie t-shirts were made with a pen as the logo. "Power of the pen" was created to show the power of words. "Je Suis Charlie shirts were created to show how words and actions affect the people around us," Ms. Spiro said.

To give a better understanding of freedom of speech, Ms. Spiro and members of the French Club created posters. They express equality, liberty and brotherhood. The posters were showcased in the World Language hallway showcase.

"The goal was to bring awareness to the importance of the French Club," Ms. Spiro said, "and the disaster at Je Suis Charlie."

English as a New Language

Sponsor: Ms. Dawn Czuba
Front Row: Paulina Lupercio, Almanoemi Acosta, Sairah Asghar, Maria Carbajal, Mam Samba; Second row: Veronica Magallanes, Tzu Ting Tseng, Leonardo Romero; Back row: Ms. Jericca Jasso, Ms. Czuba.

German and Russian Club

Sponsor: Mr. Albert Stoner, Jr.
Sarah Bradash, Tyler Johnson, Emily Gronli.

Building Trades

Sponsor: Mr. Douglas Sowash
Front row: Robert Drayton Jr., Brandon McCallister, Aaron Wright Jr.; Second row: Mr. Sowash, Roberto Jeronimo, Jerrod Wright; Third row: Marlon Turner, Richard Witkowski, Avery Silva; Back row: Juan Reyes, Montrell Harris Jackson, Joseph Young, Jeffery Long.

Building Trades students learn basics of construction

Under the direction of new instructor, Mr. Doug Sowash, building trades students learned the basics of the construction trades.

Students in the program earn nine credits over two trimesters. Dual credit is available through Ivy Tech, and students can earn credit toward an associate's degree in construction technology or construction management.

During the course of two trimesters, the students built four small mock up houses and framed floor, walls, roof rafters and sheathing. They learned to install vinyl siding and aluminum soffit and fascia and apply roofing materials.

"With that rough work done," Mr. Sowash said, "then they were ready to finish the inside, which consisted drywall and trimming. They learn how to finish drywall, install door and window casing, base, chair rail and crown molding."

Moving to the inside of the house, students learn the basics of water supply and plumbing.

"After completing the plumbing, they had to add the electrical by installing single pole, three-way light switches and outlets and two circuits," Mr. Sowash said.

During the third trimester, students learn how to read blueprints and build an exterior deck.

"We are also learning how to read and understand building codes," Mr. Sowash said. "They are also learning work ethics and people skills and the different job opportunities that are available for them."

Pirate News Network

Advisers: Mr. Brian Past and Mr. Josh Harvoth
Front row: Arriana Jimenez, Meagan Clarkson, Meyianna Sullivan, Cynthia Basu-Chavez, Rahma Safraoui, Kiarah Gamble, Allyssa Mihal; Second row: Bianca Murphy, Claret Diaz, Katherine Williamson, Sydney Tucker, Nia Wells, Quanisha Vaughn, Kathryn Jurczyk, Tommye Nelson; Third row: Mr. Harvoth, Mary Ann Wallace, Christopher Howard, Garret Ferrell, Naphtalia Ruth, Gregory Vega Jr., Jermaine Davis, Ernesto Lopez Jr., Mr. Past; Back row: Colton Maynard, Shamari Smith, Jordan Balwin, Jamal Duke, Jeremy Falaschetti.

Left: In the studio, Senior Garrett Ferrell films his opening for "Games in Real Life." "The class is very fast paced. Everything is rushed, but besides that, it's enjoyable," Ferrell said.
Below: Sitting at the news desk, Sophomore Meyianna Sullivan and Senior Cynthia Basu-Chavez get ready to anchor a segment from PNN. "The class is difficult but fun because it gives you a chance to show your creativity in a different way and show to the entire school," Basu-Chavez said.

Newspaper

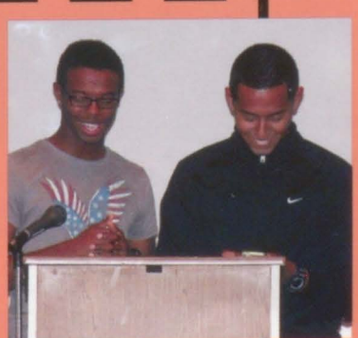
Adviser: Mrs. Teresa Procter
Front row: Najah Lewis-Singleton, Emily Gronli, Sarah Bradash, Brandy Rzepczynski; Second row: Yvonne Luna, Jamie Bhe, Timisha Ivie; Back row: Carissa Lewis, Raege'ne Thomas, Erika McClinton.

National Honor Society

Sponsors: Mrs. Erin Mulloy-Flores and Mrs. Melissa Sickinger
Front row: Mrs. Mulloy-Flores, Jenna Ducret, Marissa Presley, Sarah Bradash, Marissa Collins, Yiqi Duan, Robin Townsend, Mrs. Sickinger; Second row: David Lewis, Juan Juarez, Andrew Merced, Morgan Lesich, Mathew Hill, Victoria Frey, Destiny Chavers, Shauntielle James; Third row: Michael Robinson, Ra'vyn Dickinson, Kayla Grant, Huldah Ohiani-Jegede, Tommye Nelson, Naphtalia Ruth, Tyler Westbrook, Ashley Benkert, Angelica Navarro; Back row: Gregory Vega Jr., Aaron Morigi, Donald Long Jr., Andres Carrillo, Arnold Sanchez, Bradley Salka, Anna Feliciano, Samantha Triplett, Frank Strug Jr., Bradley Brack. Not pictured: Alexis Harris-Medina, Cynequa Cross.

Society of Student Authors

Sponsor: Mrs. Melissa Sickinger
Samantha Keith, Samantha Triplett, Jennifer Gaines.



Along with Senior Brandon Taylor, Senior Andres Carrillo performs a rap for the Society of Student Author's Open Mic Night. "Mrs. Sickinger offered extra credit to the people who came and performed," Carrillo said. "I wanted to perform and get some laughs from the crowd." Carrillo and Taylor performed an untitled rap about their lives and high school.

Good grades and community service help NHS members become good citizens

Throughout the year, National Honor Society members focus on their school work so they can maintain a 3.5 or higher G.P.A.

Beginning in February of their junior year, the sponsors told the members they had to complete 20 hours of community service.

The senior members participated in "Walk-n-Roll" to raise money for the Special Needs Department. At the end of the school year, NHS sponsored a banquet to honor the senior members as well as the top 10 in the senior class.

"Being in the program, as well as doing the projects, teaches the students to be good citizens for their community," Sponsor English teacher Mrs. Erin Mulloy-Flores said.

The required individual service project was an opportunity to learn what it is like to give back to the community and learn things they didn't know.

"I tutored, worked at the animal clinic and personally worked for Pete Visclosky," NHS President Senior Yiqi Duan said. "It opened my eyes to politics and how representatives get their information."

Members said the outcomes of the work are rewarding.

NHS Secretary Senior Huldah Ohiani-Jegede tutored honors Algebra 2 students and also volunteered at a check-in-nursery for her church.

"It was nice to be able to help others," Ohiani-Jegede said. "It was also nice to see the kid's grades go up."

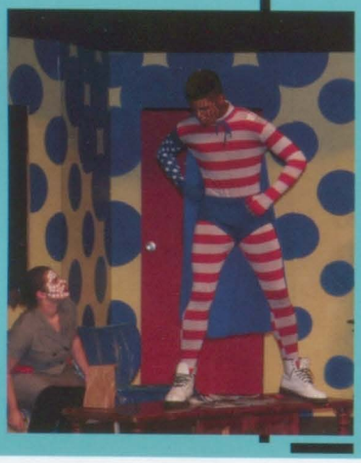
In the end, some of the members said that they gained a new perspective on life.

"I helped at a soup kitchen which made me want to help much more," NHS Treasurer Senior Angelica Navarro said. "It helped me realize how grateful I am for what I have and also helped me learn the importance of helping others."

Thespian Troupe

Sponsor: Mr. Thomas Mackey

Front row: Hope Krajnak, Karla DeLeon, Cassidy Koontz, Tyreak Thomas, Anna Davis; Second row: Molly Murphy, Leslie Hardin, Cynthia Hindmon, Kamri Smith, Jasmine Jaramillo, Samantha Keith, Mia Godfrey, Andrew Merced; Third row: Mary Turcotte, Kayla Grant, Nia Wells, Tilaya Harris, JaKobe Wilbon, Kayla Josleyn, Aaron Booker, Ferinand Aton; Fourth row: Justin Hinton, Kathryn Jurczyk, Alisha Mongold, Justin Smith, Megan Mays, Christopher Howard, Lacy Bridgeman, Xakilah Williamson,Nana Asabere; Back row: Mr. Mackey, Isaac Graham, Jakobe Edmond, Johm Grace Jr., Matthew Spicknall, Brandon Pelaquin, David Hinton II, Ronald Brewer Jr., Antonio Cornelius Jr., Rashawn Mills. Not pictured: Michael Shannon.



In the regional play, "Super Friends," Junior Rashawn Mills performs his super hero role. The play was about a relationship between friends and emphasizes the duality of human nature because it shows how good people can become corrupt. "I joined the Thespian Troupe because it's a great performing opportunity, and I can gain a lot of knowledge from Mr. Mackey and my peers," Mills said.

With a puppet in her hand, Freshman Mia Godfrey voices the character of Melody. Kids on the Block was created to bring awareness to different social and medical issues. "I joined Kids on the Block because I thought it was interesting," Godfrey said. "I like that it teaches kids lessons."

Hand in hand, a group of students bow their heads and pray with their peers during the annual Pray at the Pole. Senior Natavia Lenoir said she decided to participate because Senior Moniel Sanders encouraged her to come. Lenoir said that praying at the pole was emotional because a lot of people were crying. "Bible Club should continue this because it connected a lot of people that normally wouldn't come together," Lenoir said.

Youth Alive

Front row: Marcus Castro, Kayla Grant, Angelica Navarro, David Lewis; Back row: Arion Walton.

Voices of Reason

Director: Mrs. Melinda Reinhart

Front row: Imani Purnell, Leslie Hardin, Tilaya Harris, Marchala' Yarbrough; Second row: Jayson Jones, Lacy Bridgeman, Mary Anne Turcotte, Dashanee Hunter, John Grace Jr.; Back row: Tyreak Thomas, Nigel Moore, Ronald Brewer, Rashawn Mills.

A member of Voices of Reason for three years, Senior Tilaya Harris sings the lead in "Freedom" at the Revue. "I joined because I wanted to find a way to not just sing in choir," Harris said. She said that Voices of Reason brings people together through music and inspires them to do better. Harris said that they are always changing and welcome new members.

Bible Club

Sponsor: Mr. Dan Moslander

Front row: Chloe Howard, Alyssa Ortiz, Khandi King, Surrae Robinson, Terica Bethel, Mary Anne Turcotte; Second row: Kayla Grant, Kyle Davis, Moniel Sanders, Asianna Peterson, Robert Sanders Jr., Third row: Arion Walton, Huldah Ohiani-Jegede, Reesie Woods III, Angelica Navarro, Lawrence Williams Jr., David Lewis; Back row: DeEryl Henderson, Marcus Castro, Alexander Navarro, Vejer Cox.

During Christmastime, Sophomore Cynthia Hindmon sings 'I Surrender' by Hillsong to the senior citizens at Towne Center. Hindmon said that she joined the Bible Club to learn about other churches. "It was a great experience," Hindmon said. "It was my first trip with the club and I was able to get to know other members better."

Academic Decathlon

Sponsors: Mrs. Rachel Sonnenberg and Mr. Jason Sonnenberg
Front row: Sarah Bradash, Marissa Collins, Chloe Howard, Mam Samba; Second row: Mrs. Sonnenberg, Reesie Woods III, Joseph Twitdy, Emily Gronli; Back row: Todd Douglas, Robert Jackson.

Quiz Bowl

Sponsor: Mrs. Melissa Sickinger
Front row: Miranda Cuozzo, Marissa Collins, Emily Gronli, Mam Samba, Yiqi Duan; Second row: Reesie Woods III, Amari Smith-McPhee, Joel Schwartz; Back row: Christopher Howard, Mrs. Sickinger, Todd Douglas.

Quiz Bowl a test of students' random knowledge

Similar to Trivia, the Quiz Bowl competition tests students on general knowledge. Mrs. Melissa Sickinger returned as coach.

"I had wanted to coach an academic team since I already work with the honors students," Mrs. Sickinger said.

Members met once a week to prepare.

"You really couldn't study," Senior Reesie Woods said. "It was more of what you already knew."

The competition consists of four rounds, with the first and last being toss up rounds. During the second round the team has a chance to earn bonus points with correct answers. The third round is the category round.

"I like Quiz Bowl because I enjoy trivia games," Senior Dakyla Moore said. "Also Mrs. Sickinger was cool and funny."

During the DAC meet, the varsity team lost the first game. The JV team advanced to the second game. "The DAC meet was the most memorable moment because it was our last one," Moore said.

"The best part was when we had a question, and we all looked to Mam, because we thought she knew the answer. She put her hands in the air and said 'Gambia.' She was so confident, but it was wrong. We all laughed the whole way home."

Quill and Scroll

Adviser: Mrs. Teresa Procter
Front row: Keristen Lucero, Sarah Bradash, Viridiana Carrillo, Yvonne Luna, Emily Gronli, Najah Lewis-Singleton; Second row: Jamie Bhe, Ashley Mendez, Ra'Vyn Dickinson, Darius Adams, Angelica Navarro; Back row: Kennedy Nunn, Timisha Ivie, Diontae Phillips.

Students study ancient Rome

Even if the Academic Super Bowl team is divided by categories, they come together as one team. Mr. Paul Unterfranz and Ms. Debra Monix coached the team.

Mr. Unterfranz said they had a lot of new faces this year, and the team was larger.

"I heard it was fun, and I wasn't in it in high school, but I was in middle school," Mr. Unterfranz said. "It's a good way to get to know the students outside of class."

Before the season starts, team members pick categories to participate in and meet once a week for practice.

"I'm a part of the English, Math and Science team," Junior Anna Davis said. "My favorite is English because I love studying classic literature."

This year's theme was ancient Rome. The teams divided to study different aspects of Roman culture and architecture.

"I enjoyed the theme because I like mythology," Ms. Monix said, "and I enjoy Roman architecture."

"I enjoy Super Bowl," Senior Mam Samba said. "My favorite round is the final round because all the subjects are in it. It's like a wild card."

During the competition, the speaker reads the question as it is posted on the screen. After the question and all the multiple choice answers are read, the team has a certain amount of time to answer.

"My favorite things about the team are all the new people you get to meet," Samba said. "I also like to spend time and get to know my teammates."

Super Bowl

Sponsors: Mr. Paul Unterfranz and Ms. Debra Monix
Front row: Morgan Brinker, Sairah Asghar, Mam Samba, Courtney Chavez; Second row: Kathryn Jurczyk, Reesie Woods III, Amari Smith-McPhee, Kayla Johnson-Owens, Unique Blakely; Back row: Mr. Unterfranz, Zachary Dziki, Todd Douglas, Ms. Monix, Christopher Howard, David Hinton II, Steffan Santiago.

Spell Bowl

Sponsor: Ms. Debra Monix
Front row: Sarah Bradash, Emily Gronli, Mam Samba; Second row: Todd Douglas, Reesie Woods III, Robert Jackson; Back row: Ms. Monix.

Spelling for success

The Spell Bowl team spelled its way into the new season, striving to be competitive. The team was led by coach Ms. Debra Monix.

Senior Reesie Woods III said he pushed himself to higher expectations to progress in competitions.

"I studied the words as much as I could, and in the competition I did the best I possibly could to spell the words. At the end of it all, I had a better overall outcome than I did last year," Woods said.

Competitions include a total of ten rounds, and each member competes in one round.

A round consists of nine words that each member has to correctly spell in 15 seconds. The team practices twice a week for a half an hour and studies approximately 3,500 words, page by page for each practice.

As the season progressed, team members said they had fun preparing for competitions.

"Ms. Monix was hilarious and the team itself was funny," Senior Todd Douglas said.

One of the team's spellers, Senior Sarah Bradash, scored a perfect and loved to see the drive everyone had for competitions.

"My passion for Spell Bowl developed over the years. When I first started out, the competitions were just fun," Bradash said. "But as the years progressed, it got more competitive, so I loved to see the drive that everyone had to compete."

Chess Club

Sponsor: Mr. Sean Meagher
Front row: Cole Frey, James Raddatz; Back row: Mr. Meagher, Rebecca Koeppl, Keith Rochefort Jr., James Green.

Environmental Club

Sponsors: Mrs. Patricia Robison and Mrs. Kristin Campbell
Front row: Emmalee Colwell, Katelyn Vinson, Leia Mesarch, Kamri Smith, Jasmine Jaramillo; Second row: Jose Fragoso III, Nicole Hollowell, Sarah Juarez, Megan Mays; Third row: Mrs. Robison, Justin Hinton, Hayden Harmon, Kyle Noonan, Mrs. Campbell; Back row: Michael Shannon, Nana Asabere.

GSA brings in new members

Brought together by a common interest, Gay Straight Alliance members strived to get noticed.

GSA is a club that students organized during the 2013-14 year. With 10 members this year, the group sponsored events for all students to participate in, hoping to attract new members.

"I hoped a lot more people would recognize that we exist," Secretary Sophomore Amari Smith McPhee said, "We had an open invite GSA party trying to get students to join."

Their meetings start Wednesday morning when members meet and plan events. McPhee said the organization is a family-based club where everyone is close.

"We're like one, big, happy family," McPhee said. "We are all close friends, so we don't have to worry about being different."

The club has helped these students learn about themselves and others.

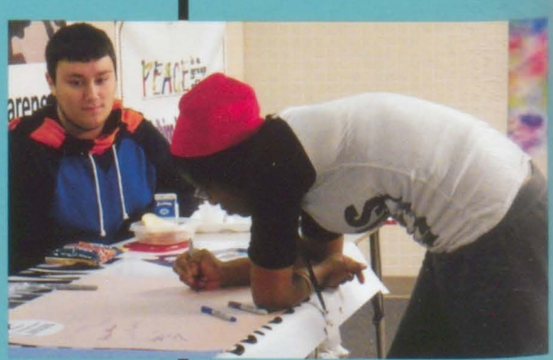
"For me the club is a way to work with other students and show support for the LGBT community," Junior Bree Montgomery said.

With rulers in their hands, Freshmen Jasmine Jaramillo and Justin Hinton drain the water for recycled crayons. The club melted the crayons and made new ones with different shapes. "I joined because I want to help clean up and make the world look prettier," Jaramillo said.

With her hand holding the top of the mixer, Freshman Leia Mesarch blends paper and water to make recycled paper. Mesarch said she joined the club because it was something to do with friends and to help the environment. "I felt proud doing this project," Mesarch said. "I didn't even know you could make recycled paper."

Gay Straight Alliance

Sponsor: Ms. Shana Chelich
Front row: Cythia Hindmon, Bree Montgomery, Mary Anne Turcotte; Back row: Daniel Levenson, Ms. Chelich, Cheyenne Adams, Francisco Vasquez, Amari Smith McPhee, Dakota Sampson, Alexandria Matzaris, Alexis Schulatz. Not Pictured: Arion Walton.



To show her support for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, Sophomore Amari Smith McPhee signs her name on a poster supporting equal rights for all. Smith McPhee said she joined the Gay Straight Alliance because she's bisexual and she likes to meet new people. "I've realized I'm not alone, and I can be who I am," Smith McPhee said. "It's a positive thing to get into and we don't judge anyone."

Youth Enriched by Service

Sponsors: Ms. Betty Jordan and Mrs. Veronica Maldonado
Front row: Jasmine Jaramillo, Shannan Moore, Rachel Rodriguez, Jordan Kenner, Danielle DeLeon, Darren Woods; Second row: Mrs. Maldonado, Edward Quintero, De'Shaun Coleman, Tatyanah Cross, Gildardo Quintero Jr, Ms. Jordan; Third row: Drew King, Naphtalia Ruth, Amber Dawning, Hannah Sawyer; Back row; Christian Espino, Justin Hinton, Antonio Cornelius Jr.

Key Club

Sponsor: Ms. Ronda Waters
Front row: Ms. Ronda Waters, Jacqueline Pollard; Back row: Marcus Castro, Samantha Triplett, Shauntielle James, Michael Mezydlo.

Art Club

Sponsor: Mrs. Janet Anderson
Front row: Jennifer Gaines, Marrisa McChelland, DeAndrea Mitchell; Second row: Julianne Roberts, Ayana Gray, Wade Flournoy, Aubren Rosas, Nicolette Cummins, Third row: London Holley, Sandra Gresham, Asia Gray, Nicole Van Nortwick, Tierney Cook, Cezar Hernandez, Johnahon Arce; Back row: William Williams, Jesse Serrano, Gregory Fontanez, Israel Akinbobuyi, Justin Gamble, Mrs. Anderson.

As she leans over her creation, Junior Julianne Roberts puts the finishing touches on her character. "I drew a girl with two different eyes," Roberts said. "One portrays good and the other portrays drugs." Roberts said that her favorite project to work on was creating and selling holiday cards to parents.

With chalk in hand, Senior Gregory Fontanez helps to work on his friend's drawing. "I love being able to release everybody's potential," Fontanez said, "because most of the others didn't think they were good. We all started out like cavemen drawing with rocks in a cave, and everybody can learn and get better."

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America

Sponsor: Ms. Carol VonBehren

Front row: Chareese Parker, DeAndrea Mitchell, Jillian Manis, Jamila Gipson; Second row: Ms. VonBehren, Ra'vyn Dickinson, Kayla Grant; Third row: Chanita Allen, Amber Dawning, Riayn Greene, Amber King; Back row: Shauntielle James, Jamie Bhe.

To prepare gifts for the senior citizens, Junior Riayn Greene fills mugs with tea and hot chocolate. She said that she thought it was a good opportunity to join because her sister was in it. As a first year member of the club, she said she thought it would be fun. "I like that we do community service in the town," Greene said. "It's good to see all the people smile."

Before the holidays, Senior Ra'vyn Dickinson helps Family Career and Community Leaders of America members wrap apple breads for the senior citizens. After joining the club as a sophomore, Dickinson became president her senior year. "I've gained more sense of leadership and how to organize events," Dickinson said.

Debate Team

Coaches: Mr. Alan Mizimakoski, Ms. Samantha St. Aubin

Front row: K.A.V.E.'T. Grooms, Promise Blakely, Rahma Safraoui, Maryam Ali; Second row: Ms. St. Aubin, Kayla Johnson-Owens, Juan Juarez; Back row: Tyler Johnson, Amari Smith McPhee, Kayla Grant, Joseph Twitdy. Not pictured: Justin Turner.

Science Olympiad

Sponsors: Ms. Ronda Waters, Mr. Bruce Curme, Mr. Gary Schlinger

Front row: Ms. Waters, Aleecia Niezgoda, Ralaunda Bradshaw, Emily Gronli; Back row: Marcus Miller, Adalberto Acosta, Darren Latiker.

Members proceed in events without a full team

Low member turnout challenged the Science Olympiad team to find a way to meet the requirements to compete. Because a full team must consist of 15 members, Coaches Mr. Gary Schlinger, Mr. Bruce Curme and Ms. Ronda Waters had team members double up.

"With the lack of numbers this year due to family and scheduling problems, we had kids in events they have never even seen before," Mr. Schlinger said.

The nine members of Science Olympiad competed at Indiana University Northwest. The events ranged from biology, chemistry, physics, earth science and engineering.

"My favorite event was Disease Detectives, which is the study of epidemiology and how diseases start and how they are spread," Senior Emily Gronli said. "It also involves how to isolate a disease that has become an epidemic."

Without a full team they were still able to compete. The team was able to score well in all building events during the competition.

"Kids put the most time in the building events," Mr. Curme said. "This is where we were able to grow the most."

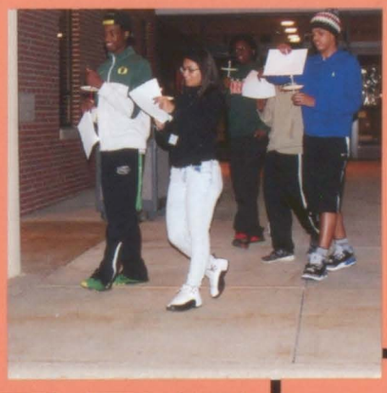
Mock Trial

Sponsors: Mrs. Sharon Row and Mrs. Alison Skertic
Front row: Emmanuel Agbana, Moniel Sanders, Morgan Lesich, Ashley Benkert; Back row: Mrs. Row, David Lewis, Mrs. Skertic. Not Pictured: Jayda Morgan, Danielle LeGrand.

Students Against Destructive Decisions

Sponsor: Mr. Paul Unterfranz
Opeyemi Akinbobuyi, Mr. Unterfranz, Brittany Jakobowicz. Not Pictured: Sean Keith.

Standing with Assistant Principal Mrs. Marnita Taylor, Junior Jermaine Davis listens to sponsors Mr. Paul Unterfranz and Socially Together and Naturally Diverse sponsor Mrs. Beverly Van Drunen talk about the statistics of teen drunk driving. "I had experience with teens and drunk driving," Davis said. "It can be very serious."



To raise awareness of suicide, Sophomore Cynthia Gomez walks with fellow students at the Candlelight Walk. Gomez and other participants walked around the school and read quotes about people who committed suicide. "It was very emotional," Gomez said. "I found out a lot of people actually care."

In the small theater, Junior Aaliyah Hall recites her poem, "Adam," at Open Mic Night. "I wrote the poem about my desire to get married," Hall said. "It's about my father issues and my stepdad making up for them." Hall said she joined Permanent Ink because of her passion for poetry and fascination with words. "My favorite performance was "545." It was a performance I did with my friend Va'Quon (Banks)," Hall said. "It explained how time is not always on your side. Time will move on with or without you."

Permanent Ink

Sponsor: Mr. David Hossler
Front row: Aleecia Niezgoda, K.A.V.E.'T. Grooms, Sarah Price, Destiny Chavers, Skye Baso; Second row: Aaliyah Hall, Ahveyon Williams, Rachel Galante, Erica Walton; Back row: Mr. Hossler, Va'Quon Banks, Jahnari Pruitt, Brandon Long Jr., Ryan McGee. Not pictured: Xakilah Williamson, Carolina Henderson.

Junior Emily Glover

Senior Alonzo Brown III

Freshman Crystn Morgan

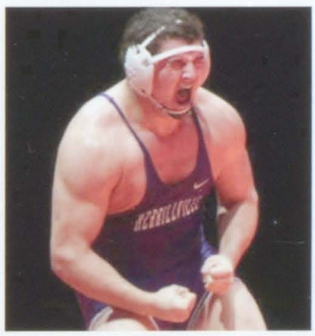
Freshman Zion Young

Buc Boulevard

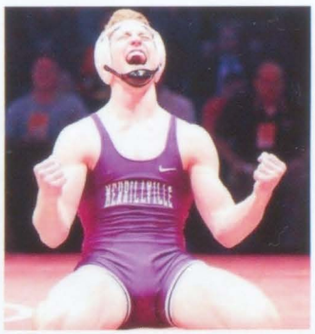
Wrestlers pave path to success

Junior Alivia Ash

Sophomore Carlos Perez



Junior Shawn Streck



Junior Jacob Covaciu

The journey of two wrestlers to a state championship was one filled with many ups and downs, sacrifices and commitments.

Junior Jacob Covaciu began as a six-year-old, when he saw a flyer for the local wrestling club.

Fellow Junior Shawn Streck followed his older brother into the sport and began when he was 11.

By their seventh grade year, though, they were best friends and had one goal in mind – a state title.

Covaciu ended his sophomore year with a state runner-up finish. Streck took home a third place medal.

Both entered their junior years with two years of state experience, unsatisfied with their previous finishes. They looked to chase that dream, starting in the offseason.

"I just made sure everything was consistent in my training and my diet. I learned to control the things I could control and that good things would happen," Covaciu said.

Streck was on the same course.

"I was running a lot of miles around my neighborhood during the summer. I wasn't just running to keep in shape, but during the runs I would think about what to do in a match," Streck said.

Preseason rankings had both at the top of their respective weight classes. While some would have cracked under the pressure, they reacted differently.

"It wasn't a disadvantage. To me, it was a confidence booster," Covaciu said.

Streck agreed. "I don't really think about it. You still have to wrestle."

The pair finished the regular season with perfect records, entering sectionals motivated.

"We don't like to switch things up (when training for sectionals). There is no relaxing," Covaciu said. "We like to keep the intensity through the whole season," Streck said.

The duo won sectional and regional titles, and both advanced to the semi-state finals. Streck won his third semi-state title, while Covaciu suffered his first loss of the season. The week before the state tournament, Covaciu said he was not focused on the loss.

"That week was no different for me. 'Who is Steven Lawrence?' was the response I had to the loss. It doesn't matter. The past is the past, and just focus on the future," Covaciu said.

Both advanced to the finals, the second trip for Covaciu and the first for Streck. Both had prepared the way they had for years.

With a 7-5 overtime victory against the man who gave him his only loss that season, Covaciu celebrated with a picture of his grandmother, his motivation. Streck finished in a powerful fashion, with a pinfall in the finals and a kiss towards his family in the fan section.

"It was unbelievable. Everything came down to three seconds, all the hours and weeks put into my dream." Covaciu said. "I was astonished."

Most Valuable Player
Leadership

Terrance Grayson

Most Improved

Matthew Sims

Lineman of the Year

Shawn Streck

Skill Player of the Year

Jonathan Robinson

Special Teams Player
of the Year

Tyreece Jones

As Crown Point linebacker Junior Cameron Watson tries to hold him back, wide receiver and outside receiver Senior Jonathan Robinson pushes hard to break free. "The best part about being on the team is practicing and playing with bros every day," Robinson said.

While Andrean's quarterback, Senior Jake Paliga, runs the ball, defensive tackle Junior Shawn Streck sacks him. "Football is something I've been playing for a long time. I grew up around it because all my brothers play," Streck said.

Top Left: With his eye on the touchdown, running back Junior Isaiah Thornton cuts in front of his opponent to get to the outside and score. "My season highlight was playing my first game back from my injury," Thornton said. Thornton ripped his right hamstring while running and couldn't play the first three games. Bottom: As safety and cornerback Junior Matthew Thompson runs to block the Crown Point defender, wide receiver Sophomore James Kirklen makes a kickoff return. "It's a big experience for me to start as a sophomore because I didn't think I would start until my junior year or senior year," Kirklen said.

Trying to get upfield, wide receiver Senior Terrance Grayson catches the ball then jerks around the lineman to score. "My goal for this year is to make it to state. We need to be undefeated in the tournament," Grayson said.

Team captures sectional championship

The season had its ups and its downs, with a win one week and a loss another. And an unlikely sectional championship.

"The season was a roller coaster. When they don't win, it is head-scratching. Winning motivates the team because they get to see their hard work pay off. Football is not like any other sport. You live with a loss for an entire week," defensive line Coach Jacob Stafford said.

During the games, the coaches played sophomores and first-year starters.

"We expected a learning curve, but we didn't expect such a long one," wide receiver Coach Sean Kinsey said.

By week seven, the focus shifted.

"To prepare, we went back to tackling and technique, reading our keys and making sure the mental part is there," Coach Stafford said. "We just have to execute."

With the new goal on their minds, the team went into sectionals to face Crown Point.

"After losing to Crown Point by only one point in the regular season, I wanted to draw them for sectionals because I knew we would win," Coach Stafford said.

The team won, 45-42, and advanced to round two.

"I think one of the game-changing moments was early in the game during the first quarter. Crown Point dropped a punt. We got the ball back and the excitement level shot back up," Coach Kinsey said.

The team hosted Lake Central for the sectional championship. Weather pelted the players alternately with rain, snow, sleet and hail the entire game. The team won the championship, 21-19.

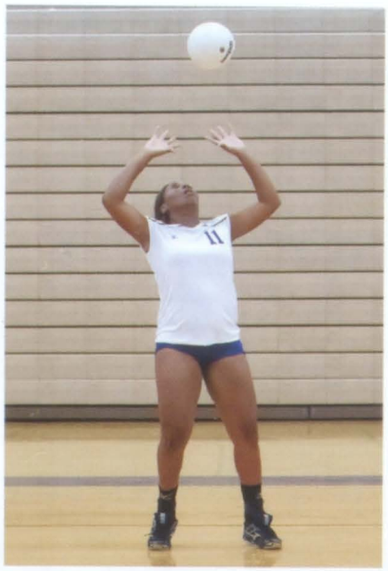
"The most memorable moment of the season was winning the sectional title even though everyone doubted us," offensive lineman Senior Ray-Quan Hampton said.

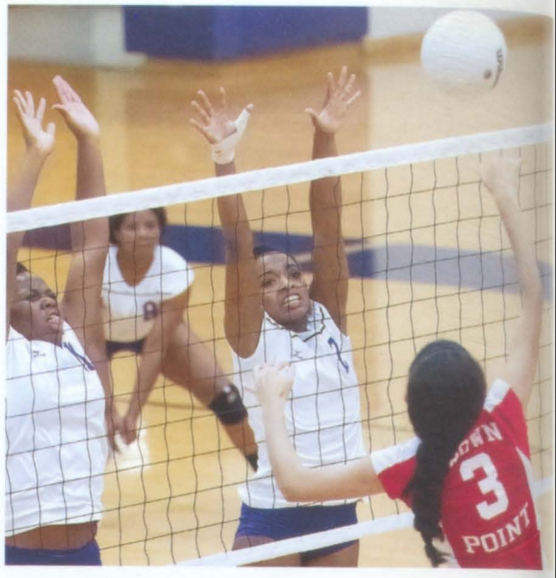
"The season had a lot of ups and downs, but we fought through the adversity," Hampton said. "The fact that we didn't have the best regular season made just making it to regionals a huge accomplishment."

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
South Bend Clay	W	35-28
Andrean	L	45-34
Crown Point	L	21-20
Portage	W	20-15
Michigan City	W	27-6
LaPorte	L	42-32
Valparaiso	W	36-6
Lake Central	L	28-7
Chesterton	L	7-0
Sectionals		
Crown Point	W	45-42
Lake Central	W	21-19
Regionals		
Penn	L	42-6

Season Record
6-6





To begin a new play, defensive specialist Senior Ashli McNair goes up for a serve. McNair started playing volleyball because to her, it is both a physical and a mental sport. She ended her season with 10 aces and served at 91.2 percent. "Senior Night was bittersweet because I'll miss the girls," McNair said.

Top Left: With the ball coming down, setter Sophomore Makayla Pearson sets the ball. Pearson ended the season with 1581 ball-handling attempts. "Volleyball is fun because of the energy and the feeling you get when you make a really good play or dig against a really good team," Pearson said. Top Right: With her arms extended, outside hitter Junior Maya Griffin goes up to block the right side hitter on the opposing team. She had 27 blocks this season. "This season, I improved on learning to read the other team and seeing their defense to know where to hit the ball," Griffin said. Bottom Left: Focused on the ball, middle hitter Senior Morgan Harris attacks the ball. Harris said she likes her position because she receives most of the action. She ended the season with 131 kills. "I feel as though I have experience, so I don't get nervous when playing," Harris said. "It's just another game."

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Griffith	W	3-0
Lowell	L	3-0
LaPorte Tourney		3(L)-1(W)
Calumet Christian	L	3-0
Andrean	L	3-0
Portage	L	3-0
Michigan City	L	3-0
Valparaiso	L	3-0
KV Classic		3rd
Washington Twp.	L	3-0
LaPorte	L	3-0
Lake Central	L	3-0
Chesterton	L	3-0
Crown Point	L	3-0
Wheeler	L	3-0
Portage	L	3-0
Michigan City	L	3-0
Valparaiso	L	3-0
LaPorte	L	3-0
Bishop Noll	L	3-0
Lake Central	L	3-0
Hanover Central	L	3-0
Chesterton	L	3-0
Crown Point	L	3-0
Sectional		
Chesterton	L	3-1

Season Record
5-26

New coach sets high standards

A new coach set new expectations for members of the team, and the team saw steady improvement and plenty of positive attitudes.

"My first year was challenging because even though I see the potential and athletic ability, it is hard to make them realize it and play to their full potential," Coach Veronica Siwy said.

Of the nine players on the team, two returned from the previous season with varsity experience.

"Because only two of us really have varsity experience, it's a lot more pressure to lead the team and set an example for the type of team we wanted to be," outside hitter Junior Maya Griffin said.

Despite the losing record, Griffin noted that during the games, the team never gave up and played until the last point.

"One of our strengths is that we always fight through the last point," Griffin said.

Going into sectionals, the girls' goal was to win in the first round of sectionals against Chesterton. During the regular season, the team had lost to Chesterton twice, each time with a score of 3-0.

"I felt prepared to play for sectionals. We worked on a lot of game situation scenarios so we wouldn't make those mistakes in the game," setter Sophomore Makayla Pearson said.

Down two sets, the team won the third set. For the first time, the girls had forced Chesterton to play a fourth set.

"The team should be proud of themselves for the improvement that they have made. We lost as a team, and not a single person cost us the game. If we would have won, it would have been as a team, so losing wasn't any different," Coach Siwy said. "You win together and you lose together. We started from scratch this year, but that can't be our excuse anymore. We have to keep moving forward and keep getting better."

Most Valuable Player

Morgan Harris

Sportsmanship

Maya Griffin

Most Improved

Angel Munchenburg

Standing up from a down-low position, libero Senior Janae West gets ready to pass the ball. West achieved her goal of becoming a libero and ended the season with 412 digs. "I like volleyball because of how intense it is," West said.

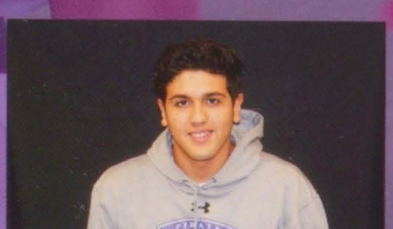
Most Valuable Player

Bradley Brack

Leadership

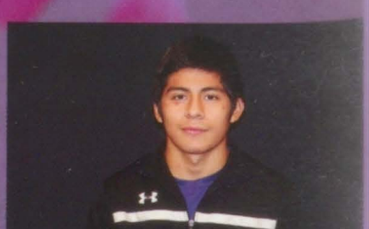
Arnold Sanchez

Sportsmanship



Ernesto Lopez

Most Improved

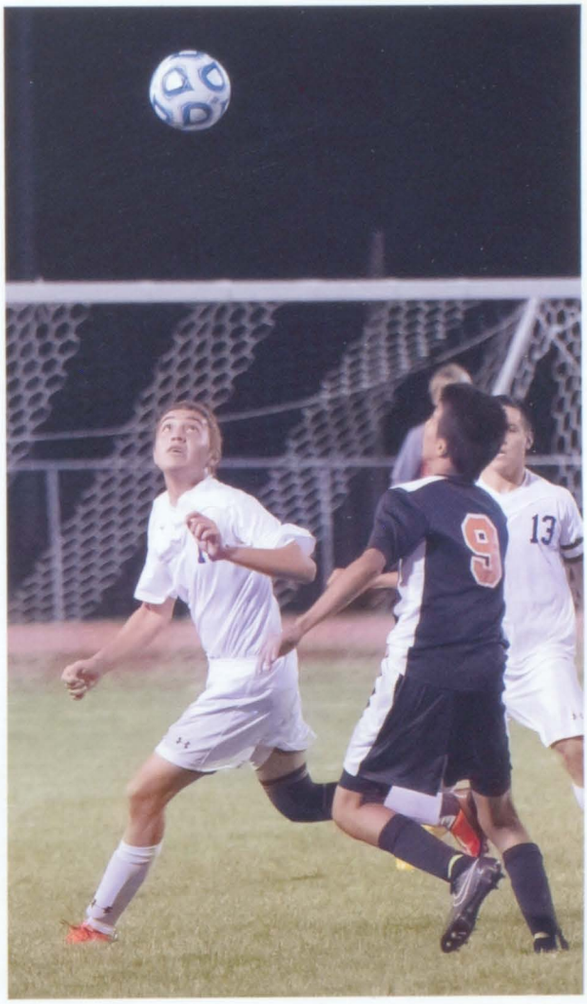


Michael De La Pena

As he defends against LaPorte Senior Joe MacLennan, midfielder Senior David Rodriguez keeps the ball in his possession. "This season was good," Rodriguez said. "We won nine games and won the Hoosier Cup."

Hands up and ready to catch the ball, goalie Senior Bradley Brack saves Lafayette Jefferson's shot from going in. "My strength is that I am tall, which helps me catch a ball in the air," Brack said.

Using footwork and skill, Senior Jeremiah Jones balances the ball on his foot. "I prepared for the season by focusing and doing the summer conditioning," Jones said. "No days off."



Above: With LaPorte Sophomore Edgar Villa rushing toward him, midfielder Senior Gregory Vega Jr. focuses to win the 50-50 ball in the air. "Our team goals were to get to double-digit wins," Vega said. "We also wanted to win Hoosier Cup, which we did." Left: His eyes are on the ball while two opposing players are coming toward him, but forward Junior Jorge Osoria Jr. focuses on distributing the ball to a forward. "My weakness is defending," Osoria said, "but my strengths are dribbling, speed and scoring." His goal was to get twice as many goals as last season.

In competition with Lafayette Jefferson midfielder Junior Travis Kirby, forward Senior Jamal Duke uses all his power to steal the ball. "My strengths are that I am big and fast," Duke said. "I am also very aggressive and good at toe balls."

Senior-strong team wins Hoosier Cup

The senior-led team posted one of the best seasons in recent history, winning the most games since 2009.

As they do every summer, the team went to camp at Indiana University-Purdue University in Fort Wayne. For four days, the team slept in the dorms, practiced soccer and played against teams in Fort Wayne.

"It increases our soccer skills and is great for team-bonding experience because the guys are focused on soccer and working together," Head Coach Brian Past said.

Once the season started, the team attended the Hoosier Cup. For the past ten years, the team traveled to Bloomington, Indiana, but this was the first time the team walked away with an award. They won their division by beating three teams.

"Out of my 18 years as varsity coach, this was one of my most enjoyable seasons," Coach Past said. "Part of it was the 16 seniors I got to work with. They are a great group of guys with great work ethics who consistently improved themselves to be the best they could be."

Before the Hoosier Cup tournament started in early September, the team had already played six regular-season games and knew where they needed to make changes in order to win the cup.

"We just came up with a plan to dominate and we played like a team," forward Senior Jamal Duke said.

In addition to their Hoosier Cup Division victory, two players were selected to be a part of the All-District team. The Indiana Soccer Coaches Association chose Duke and goalie Senior Bradley Brack for the District 1 team.

"It means a lot knowing all my hard work has paid off," Brack said.

In each of Indiana's six districts, 18 players are selected. With the players selected, teams formed and played each other as college coaches scouted.

"It feels really great," Duke said. "It feels like all my hard work is being acknowledged."

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Portage	L	1-0
Lafayette Jefferson	W	3-1
Andrean	W	1-0
LaPorte	L	1-0
Kankakee Valley	W	3-0
Chesterton	L	6-0
Hoosier Cup		3-0
Valparaiso	L	1-0
Munster	L	3-0
Michigan City	W	1-0
Lowell	W	2-0
Crown Point	L	2-0
West Lafayette	W	1-0
Lake Central	L	3-0
Hobart	T	0-0
Sectionals		
Crown Point	L	1-0

Season Record
9-8-1

Dribbling past Highland forward Sophomore Priscilla Carvajal, midfielder Junior Rebecca Knight pushes the ball up the field. "My personal goal was to get healthy because I came off the beginning of the season with a sprained ankle, and I also sprained my MCL through the middle of the season," Knight said.

In a game against Highland, Freshman Reannah Soto attempts to steal the ball from her opponent. "My weakness is that I don't play my best every game," Soto said. Soto was the top shooter with four shots on goal.

Top Right: With her teammates around her, defender Senior Chloe Stone controls the ball on the Pirates' end of the field. "I like playing defense because I can use my strength of having good ball skills and keeping the ball at my feet," Stone said. Bottom Right: Having sole possession of the ball, Junior Erika McClinton prepares to make a play for the Pirates. "I had to play forward and defensive midfield for a while, which means I had to try to push the ball up the field and score," McClinton said. Bottom Left: Clearing the ball during a goal kick, defender Senior Meagan Clarkson tries to put the ball back into the Pirates' possession. "I hate that I'm too small because when I get put against a big offense player, I can't be so aggressive with them," Clarkson said. Being small was Clarkson's main challenge playing defense for the first time.

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Portage	L	1-0
LaPorte	W	3-0
Highland	T	1-1
Wheeler	L	2-0
Chesterton	L	4-0
Kankakee Valley	L	3-0
Lowell	W	3-0
Valparaiso	L	3-0
Andrean	L	2-0
Griffith	L	4-0
Michigan City	W	7-1
Crown Point	L	5-0
Munster	L	5-0
Lake Central	L	2-1
Hobart	W	2-0
Sectionals		
Kankakee Valley	L	3-0

Season Record
4-11-1

Young team faces challenges

The team faced many challenges this season. Without a junior varsity team, players battled for the 24 desired spots on varsity. And those who won the coveted positions then fought to win games.

Coach Benjamin Daniel said losing the junior varsity team and having only one varsity team had both its ups and downs.

The younger players, on the other hand, gained varsity experience.

"On the downside, some of the players we had on the team did not have much playing time," Coach Daniel said. "But on the bright side, the players who would be on junior varsity were able to see the varsity players play and get the opportunity to play with them."

The players and coaches agreed that their main goal was to play well in the competitive Duneland Athletic Conference.

Having younger girls on the team, as well as having only one team, made some players question whether they would reach this goal.

"We wanted to show everyone that even though we were a younger team," Junior Alanna Heath said, "we could still hold our own."

Coach Daniel named Freshman Meagan Wise and Juniors Rebecca Knight and Jayana Wolak as the co-captains. Although it is unusual to have a freshman as a captain, the team felt it was a positive change.

"Having a freshman captain was good for the team," Heath said. "It shows that you have to earn your spot through hard work and not just get your spot from your grade."

Most Valuable Player

Erika McClinton

Leadership

Rebecca Knight

Sportsmanship

Reannah Soto

Most Improved

Carolina Henderson

With Highland defender Sophomore Adriana Castillo at her side, Freshman Meagan Wise tries to keep the ball in the Pirates' possession. "Being captain my freshman year gave me a lot of motivation to better myself, and it helped me become a better leader," Wise said.

Most Valuable Player
and Leadership

Maryam Ali

In a follow-up motion, Sophomore Kathryn Jurczyk holds her stance after she has driven the ball. "During games, I usually take deep breaths and think about all the important things in my life," Jurczyk said. Jurczyk, who has been playing golf since the summer before her freshman year, plays the No. 2 position. "I was looking for a new sport to join and thought golf would be fun," Jurczyk said. Jurczyk said her highlight for this season was when she made par twice on the back nine holes.

Careful not to use too much force, Senior Brianna Cole swings her club. "I love wooden clubs because you get better contact with the ball and you hit better," Cole said. Cole switched between No. 3 and No. 4 throughout the season. "The biggest challenge is that my ball never goes straight," Cole said. "But I just stay calm and keep swinging." Cole scored her season low with a score of 61 against Highland.

Hands and arms steady, Senior Kelci Coker chips the ball. "My favorite club is the driver because I hit better with it," Coker said. Coker had a season low of 65 against Highland and also golfed a par. "My goal was to get on varsity this year, and I was so happy when I did," Coker said. Coker played No. 5.

The sand flies everywhere as Sophomore Lacy Bridgeman attempts to escape the sand trap. Bridgeman rotated between No. 6 and No. 7. "This is my first year, so when I am playing in games, I am careful to make sure I have everything," Bridgeman said. "Also, I was so proud of myself when I got a score under 70."

In her stance, Junior Jessica Cole attempts to make contact. "Senior Night was so much fun," Cole said, "but realizing that this was my last time playing with the seniors was sad. I am really going to miss them." Cole played both No. 6 and No. 7. "This is my first year, so I got really distracted and frustrated," Cole said. "During the game, I would say little words of encouragement to boost my confidence."

Against an evergreen at the edge of the fairway, Senior Maryam Ali watches the ball go to the green. "During the games, I try to relax," Ali said. "I usually get frustrated, but then I remind myself to relax and take it slow." Ali plays No. 1. "My favorite team to face was Boone Grove because the No. 1 player and I are really close," Ali said. Ali was consistently the lowest scorer on the team.

New birdies flock to the green

Several obstacles challenged the girls' golf team.

Players had to assume new leadership roles for the season. Girls without any experience joined the team, but the team remained small.

Usually a team will have 10 to 12 players. Merrillville's team consisted of nine this year.

"Sometimes having a small team can be beneficial, and it can hurt us at the same time," Senior Maryam Ali said. "When it's a big team, if you have high scores, it's hard to come back; but if you have a small team, your scores can sometimes benefit your end score," Ali said.

Rainy weather also tested the team.

"We got a week off, and it was hard to get back into the golf mindset when we got back," Ali said. "When we were back, we had a match and we didn't have any practice."

Team members said they expected to have more wins this year than the previous year. The season record may have been the same, but their individual performances improved.

"We all have improved, especially (Senior) Kelci Coker. Last year, she was on junior varsity and now she is on varsity and had lowest score of the season Senior Night," Senior Kayla Grant said. "Last season, Maggie Connelly was our number one. We made up losing her by adding four to five girls."

Some of the golf members became interested in golf because of their friends, coaches and parents.

"I became interested when my friend Brianna Cole, told me about one of her matches and how she wanted me to join, so I just did it," Coker said.

While they said they endured difficulties during the season, the team also shared good memories.

"Our highlight of the season was Senior Night when we beat Calumet," Coach Patti Tubbs said. "The fact that we beat them was nice."

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Boone Grove	L	233-257
Rensselaer	L	203-247
Michigan City	L	214-261
Munster	L	202-260
Valparaiso	L	180-276
Lake Central	L	156-253
Portage	L	209-255
Tri meet		
Bishop Noll	L	245-248
Highland	L	205-248
Crown Point	L	169-261
Chesterton	L	205-266
Highland	L	211-248
Calumet	W	247-277
DAC		8th
Sectionals		6th

Season Record
1-12

Playing No. 1 singles, Senior Montriel Shell serves the ball to his opponent from Wheeler. "I have to be consistent and hit harder than my opponent," Shell said. Shell said that getting more wins than losses made it an easier season.

While returning a serve to his opponent's side of the net, No. 1 doubles Sophomore Ayron Williams tries to get the win for his match. "Watching it on television motivates me to keep playing and to be more dedicated," Williams said.

Top Right: At a home meet against Wheeler, playing No. 1 doubles, Junior Jason Bell hits a backhand shot to his opponent. While playing on an injured foot for most of the season, he continued to win games with his team. "I feel I could have brought the team closer together," Bell said. Bottom Right: In a forehand slice to the alley, playing No. 2 doubles, Junior Derel Shell makes a pass to his opponent. "I know I could have had better serves and tried to get the ball quicker," Shell said. Although he could not play in the last game of sectionals, he still enjoyed it. "My brother Montriel Shell, who is a senior, motivated me to do better throughout my season," Shell said.

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Kankakee Valley	W	5-0
Highland	L	5-0
Wheeler	L	5-1
Valparaiso	L	5-1
Crown Point	L	5-0
Noblesville Tourney		5-1
LaPorte	L	5-1
Portage	L	3-2
Warsaw Invite		6th
Michigan City	W	3-2
Chesterton	W	5-0
Hobart	W	5-0
Lake Central	L	4-1
Munster	L	5-0
Lowell	L	3-2
Sectionals		
River Forest	W	4-1
Andrean	L	3-2

Season Record
5-10

Racket practice makes perfect

The philosophy of the boys' tennis team was simple.

"Work hard, play hard and improve," Sophomore Joseph Harris III said.

Although the team managed to finish the regular season with four wins, each player improved his overall game.

"I fill up the ball machine and work on my backhand for hours to improve that particular aspect of my tennis career," Sophomore Deion Charleston Jr. said.

The team worked more as a whole rather than with each player working by himself.

"As a team, we worked on serves, running and getting in shape during the postseason, volleys and worked on mistakes made the game before in practice so that you don't make those mistakes again in the following game," No. 1 doubles Sophomore Ayron Williams said.

No. 1 singles Senior Montriel Shell said he sees a lot of potential in the team, especially in Williams and No. 2 singles Sophomore Steffan Santiago.

Santiago said he also worked on his skill set.

"I moved more and worked on my strokes," Santiago said, "and worked harder in practice with drills to improve on my overall skills."

No. 2 doubles Junior Derel Shell said he has been working harder in practice to improve his game.

"I ran more two miles every day, got out the ball machine and hit 200 balls backhand three times a week to improve on my backhand specifically," Derel said.

Montriel said he has been giving teammates tips to improve their games.

The senior captain said he also advises players to make sure that every day they work harder in practice, even if that means staying after for more in-depth development.

"Come in with a mental focus in practice as well as on the court to do your best always," he said. "Don't think someone is better than you because of their position on the team. You can always move up."

Most Valuable Player

Montriel Shell

Sportsmanship

Marcus Miller

Most Improved

Keith Rochefort

With a backhand shot in a match against Wheeler, No. 2 singles Sophomore Steffan Santiago hits the ball. Santiago said he uses strategy more than power, and he tries not to let distractions bring him down. "Tennis is fun, and I can't wait until the next year's season," Santiago said.

Most Valuable

Miguel Tapia

Leadership

Brandon Hurson

Sportsmanship

Michael Johnson

Most Improved

Michael Sparks

With the goal of becoming mentally stronger, Senior Michael Johnson paces himself to the finish line. "My team and parents inspire me by telling me that I can always do better," Johnson said. Johnson finished 29th at sectionals with a time of 18:36 and 38th in regionals with a time of 18:33.

Top Left: Trying to run a fast time for an underclassman on varisty, Junior Nicholas Owens runs during a meet. "My favorite course to run on was New Prairie's. I prefer difficult courses because it helps you improve on the easier ones," Owens said. As the season was coming to a close, Owens had problems with his shins. Top Right: One foot in front of the other, Sophomore Alec Edwards finds inspiration in his teammates. "I want to be good just like my captians, Seniors Miguel Tapia, Brandon Hurson and Michael Johnson," Edwards said. "They inspire me because they are really good leaders." Bottom Right: First-year runner Senior Michael Sparks Jr. paces himself during the race. Sparks joined to keep in shape for track during his off season and has a personal record of 18:25. "My goal for the season was to have a better kick at the end of the race. I wanted to become stronger physically and mentally," Sparks said. Bottom Left: Senior Brandon Hurson finds the drive to keep going in the middle of the course. "I always want to be a role model for the freshmen and younger runners," Hurson said. Hurson ran his personal record of 17:33 twice this year. He finished 19th in sectionals with a time of 17:55, 32nd in regionals with a time of 18:24 and 93rd at semi-state with a time of 17:42.

Mid-stride, Senior Miguel Tapia pushes himself to run harder. Tapia's goal was to advance to state individually by practicing hard every day. "When I am running during a meet, I am inspired by the fact that this race might be my last race," Tapia said. Tapia took 10th in sectionals with a time of 17:32, 31st in regionals with a time of 18:23 and 75th at semi-state with a time of 17:27.

Runners train for perfection

As the boys' cross country season approached, their main objective was to focus and improve as a team. The senior leaders tried to teach the new members running techniques and strategies, as well as enthusiasm and motivation for running long races.

"The first couple of races were rough," Senior Miguel Tapia said. "We were trying to keep the newer runners in our pack."

Running as a group allows teammates to encourage each other during the race. Tapia and fellow Seniors Brandon Hurson and Michael Johnson II tried to lead by example.

"They started listening," Tapia said of the younger runners. "They didn't take it easy in practice. I encouraged them to think about what they do outside of practice. More running. Watch the diet."

Coach Michael Hoffman agreed that the younger runners learned a lot this season. And with four spots to fill next year, the coach said he is confident they will improve.

"The seniors were trying to teach the young runners that consistency is the key," Coach Hoffman said. "Running every race and pushing the pace every day is so important."

Johnson said his personal goal was to become more mentally tough and to try as hard as he could at all times. He has been a member of the team since his freshman year.

"Everybody is my competition because you never know who could be up next to take your spot. I don't underestimate anyone because I never know who has been practicing to improve themselves when no one else is around," Johnson said.

By early October, the team mindset was to advance as a team.

At sectionals, the team placed seventh of 11 teams.

"We missed getting out as a team by one point," Coach Hoffman said. "I knew it was going to be close."

Tapia placed 10th and Hurson placed 19th. Johnson placed 29th and Junior Dondre Minnion placed 31st.

Tapia, Hurson, Johnson and Minnion advanced to regionals. Tapia and Hurson advanced to semi-state at New Prairie.

"I tried to make every day I ran a race," Tapia said after the season. "I appreciated this season a lot because of the fact that people were trying to work hard rather than trying to avoid hard work."

Scoreboard

Opponent	Score
Andrean	2nd of 10
Lake Central	7th of 8
Thornton Fractional	6th of 23
Lowell	10th of 21
New Prairie	19th of 26
Tri Meet	2nd of 3
Highland	5th of 20
DAC	8th of 8
Sectionals	7th of 11

While trying to pull ahead in a race against Portage, Senior Camille Ochoa tries to maintain her lead. Ochoa relies on her fellow teammates to motivate her to be better. "I'm so lucky to be with the girls I'm with now. They're so supportive and inspiring," Ochoa said. Ochoa placed 6th at sectionals and advanced to regionals, where she placed 8th.

Top Left: In a race, Senior Kayleigh Champion attempts to put herself in the right mindset for the competition. "I know I'm not going to be in the top five, so I try to steal points from the other teams," Champion said. Champion has a personal best of 22:33 and plans to improve. Top Right: Cheering on her teammates, Senior Moniel Sanders tries her best to keep the runners focused and inspired. "Everybody calls me a good motivator because I'm good at getting everyone ready for meets." Sanders said. "I pray before every meet." Sanders started running cross country initially to lose weight, but she said she continued because of her love for the sport. Bottom Right: In an attempt to pass her rival, Senior Megan Dziewicki speeds up her pace. "My coaches have been setting the bar high and telling me to get through the race," Dziewicki said. Dziewicki injured her leg early in the season. Bottom Left: With exhaustion setting in, Freshman Diamond Taher pushes to finish the race. "I run just to run and to overcome challenges," Taher said. Taher's best is 21:07. Taher said she ran cross country to stay in shape for track. "I like long distance because I love to run, and I love to compete," Taher said. "I am very competitive."

Scoreboard

Opponent	Score
Andrean	3rd of 10
Lake Central	6th of 8
Thornton Fractional	6th of 22
Lowell	7th of 23
New Prairie	17th of 25
Tri Meet	2nd of 3
Highland	1st of 20
DAC	7th of 8
Sectionals	2nd of 11
Regionals	3rd
Semi-State	14th

Runners train, endure pain, never complain

Throughout the season, the girls raced through rough courses, making sure they stayed in tune in order to have a successful season.

To start off, the girls had to become close and bond so that they could work together and encourage each other during a race.

"One challenge we started off with was staying together," Senior Camille Ochoa said. "The chemistry was off and the grades were divided, but now everyone comes together and nobody is excluded."

Unlike the other girls, Ochoa said she also had to get used to competing in a different state so that she could have a good season.

"It's taken a lot to adjust to. I was so established in Arizona, but I'm so lucky to be with the girls I'm with because they are very supportive," Ochoa said.

As the season pushed on, so did the girls. Each made attempts to motivate each member as they participated in a race.

"We would yell at them to get rid of any nerves. We just scream for them and cheer them on to keep them going," Junior Eryn Jenkins said.

Along with pushing to create a stronger-bonded team, each of the girls had to run along courses that weren't physically and mentally easy. Each of them had to endure the courses in order to achieve good times and place high.

"There would be tall grasses or hills that we would have to run through," Jenkins said. "Looping around would mess with our minds and there was no way to cope with it, so we just stuck it out and ran."

The girls said their commitment, endurance and the "family" bond that they shared was rewarding. They placed second at sectionals and third at regionals.

"We did pretty good this year. I was glad to place in semi-state this year," Senior Kayleigh Champion said.

The girls' team consisting of Ochoa, Senior Crystal Cabrera, Freshman Diamond Taher, Freshman Brendea McNeal, Champion and Senior Megan Dziewicki advanced to semi-state. They were the first girls to advance as a team since 2000.

Most Valuable

Camille Ochoa

Leadership

Kayleigh Champion

Sportsmanship

Crystal Cabrera

Most Improved

Brendea McNeal

In constant motion, Senior Crystal Cabrera pushes herself to finish the race. "My most memorable moment was when my team got first in the Highland Invitational," Cabrera said. "I ran, even through an injury, and we still got first. I felt it was the first time we accomplished something as a team." Cabrera said she joined the team because she thought it would be a good experience. "I was so thrilled when we advanced to semi-state," Cabrera said. "I am proud of my team and we've grown, and I wouldn't have changed a thing about this season." Cabrera finished the season running a 21:01.9 at semi-state.

Most Valuable Cheerleader

Khaila Sanchez

Leadership

Keristen Lucero

Sportsmanship

Sho'n Mabone

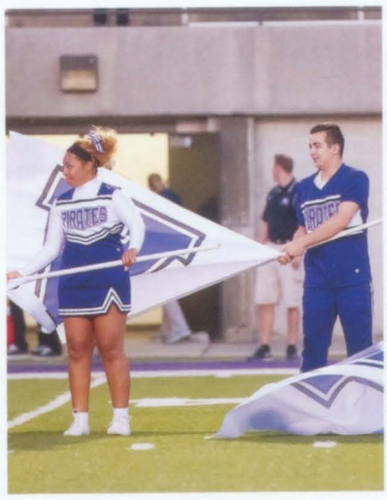
Most Improved

Tori Holst

During the starting lineup at the Class 4A LaPorte Regional Championship game, Freshman Taylor Ballard hits a half liberty. "I was so tired for that game because we had cheered two games earlier that day," Ballard said.

Senior Khaila Sanchez cheers at the Crown Point Class 4A Semi-State Championship Game. "It was really exciting cheering during the timeouts. The crowd was really involved. I was proud of the team for making it so far," Sanchez said.

During a timeout at a boys' basketball game, the cheerleaders perform the Christmas tree stunt.



Before a home football game, Seniors Serina Ford and Christian Espino wave the flags as the announcer names the starting lineup. "The flags were not difficult to maneuver. I just paid attention and followed the girls," Espino said.

At the end of their trademark William Tell routine, Sophomore Samantha Kale waves the Pirate flag.

Cheerleaders show versatality

From the beginning, coaches set two goals to increase stunt difficulty and improve dance technique.

"We set high expectations for the team and held them accountable in practice. There was this 'yes we can' attitude this year. I believe camp also helped us," Coach Maddie Beason said.

The team attended a four-day National Cheerleading Association Camp at St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana, in June.

They learned new stunts, cheers, dances and chants.

The team brought home a spirit stick and two titles, Top Team Performance and Champion Chant.

NCA surprised Senior Keristen Lucero with the Individual Leadership Award.

A majority of the girls were All American nominees.

Juniors Miracle Akins and Dominique Carpenter made the All American Team. Carpenter had the highest score.

"I was ecstatic because I didn't think it could happen," Carpenter said.

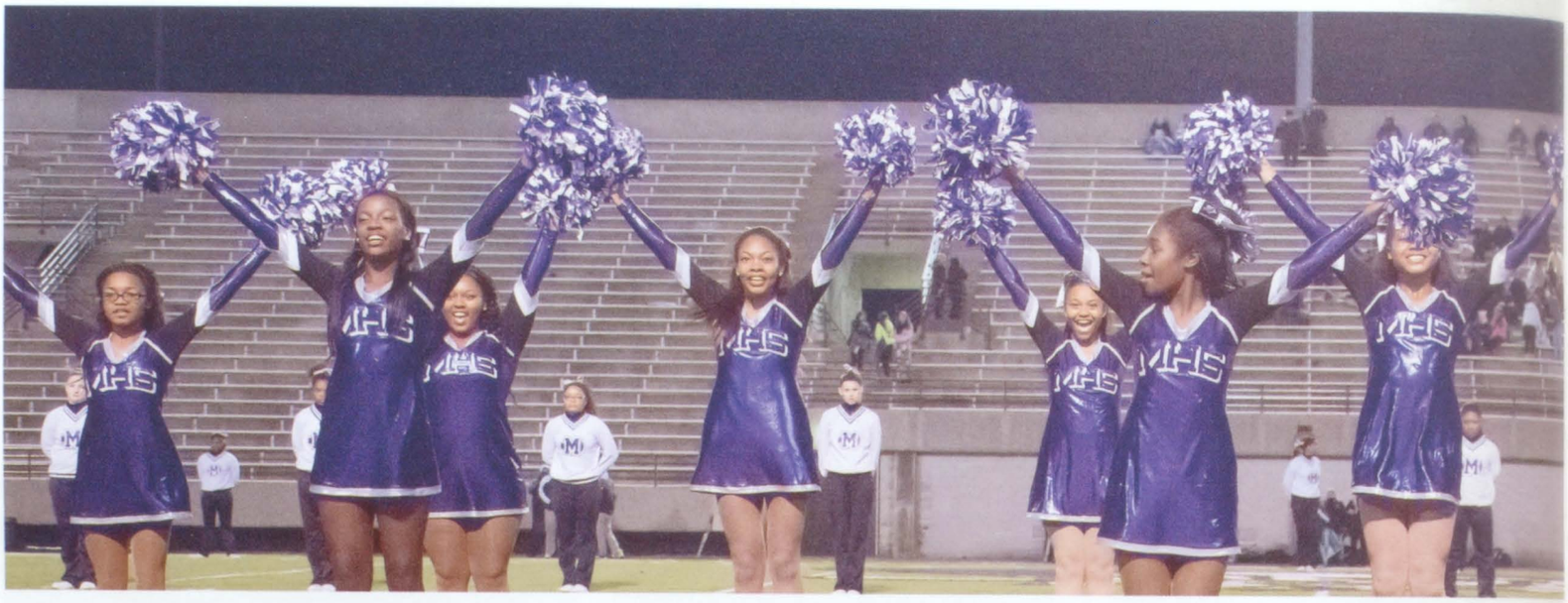
In the summer the team practiced Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings.

"Our team is the true definition of versatile. [Freshman] Taylor [Ballard] stepped up the challenge when we switched her from basing and back spotting to flying," Coach Lori Govert said.

"Having a large team allowed us to rearrange. People had to be a team player and step up," Coach Govert said.

Coach Beason added, "Belief. Belief had a lot to do with it."

With the squad during a timeout, Junior Haley Funches dances.



Top: While performing at the beginning of the Homecoming football game, the team preps for double toe-touches. "My goals for the season were to get my leg hold and to stop being so anti-social," Sophomore Ashlei Hunt said. Hunt also has a sister on the team, Freshman Alyssa Hunt. Bottom Left: During halftime at the Crown Point basketball game, Junior Katherine Williamson performs a pom routine. "The pom routine has great energy, and I know the crowd likes it based off of applause, facials and overall energy," Williamson said. Bottom Right: Junior Marlana de Moraes Emiliano, Sophomore Mariahcruz Igartua and Senior Da'Ja'Nay Askew perform a kickline. "A kickline is when you link up with the other girls and kick in harmony with straight legs and pointed feet," Askew said.

Family bond makes lasting impressions

To kick off the season, coaches set a goal to run the dance program with a family atmosphere.

The team practiced three times a week.

"We ended the week with a chat session that lasted about 20 minutes. Sometimes we would discuss inspirational quotes to help connect the team and coaches," Coach Celia Pollard said.

The girls spent time outside of practice with each other as well.

"The bond is very strong with the girls. We are like a family," Sophomore Taylor Upshaw said.

The dancers had seven original routines that were choreographed by Senior Charity Gilkey and several alumni who returned to help. With eight new members, the seven returning members became team leaders.

"I helped the new girls with their confidence. I also helped teach technique and taught some of the pregame routines," Junior Katherine Williamson said.

The team as a whole faced another challenge.

"The team really stepped up to the challenge of adversity. There were times either Coach [Laytoya] Tyson or I couldn't be there for them, but they were able to come together," Coach Pollard said.

Several girls said they felt that being part of the team benefited them.

"Being on the team has helped me overcome my shyness. It has also helped me with getting along with others," Upshaw said.

Junior Allyssa Walls agreed. "It made me a more responsible person, and my coaches taught me about life," she said.

The end of the season was bittersweet as the team said goodbye to seven seniors and Coach Pollard, who announced she would no longer coach the team.

"They are a great group of girls. I never expected to coach a dance team. They brought so much into my life. I carry them with me," Coach Pollard said. "If we touched at least one of the girls, then we set out what we planned to do."

Performing at the Andrean basketball game, Sophomore Taylor Upshaw dances with her little camp sister. "The experience with the little ones was amazing. I had a chance to help them with choreography and dancing with facials," Upshaw said. "My favorite thing was being like a big sister to them. I will always remember Derby, who drew me a picture."

On the sidelines at the beginning of the football game, Captain Senior Charity Gilkey performs a pregame routine. "My favorite pregame of the season is Divalicious. It's full of energy, and it's just the right amount of technique. Not too much and not too little," Gilkey said.

Mental Attitude

Bethany Rochefort

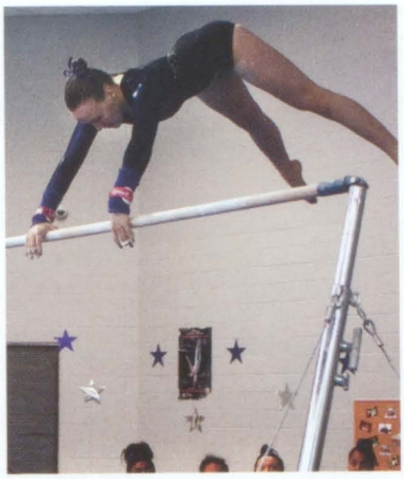
Most Valuable Gymnast

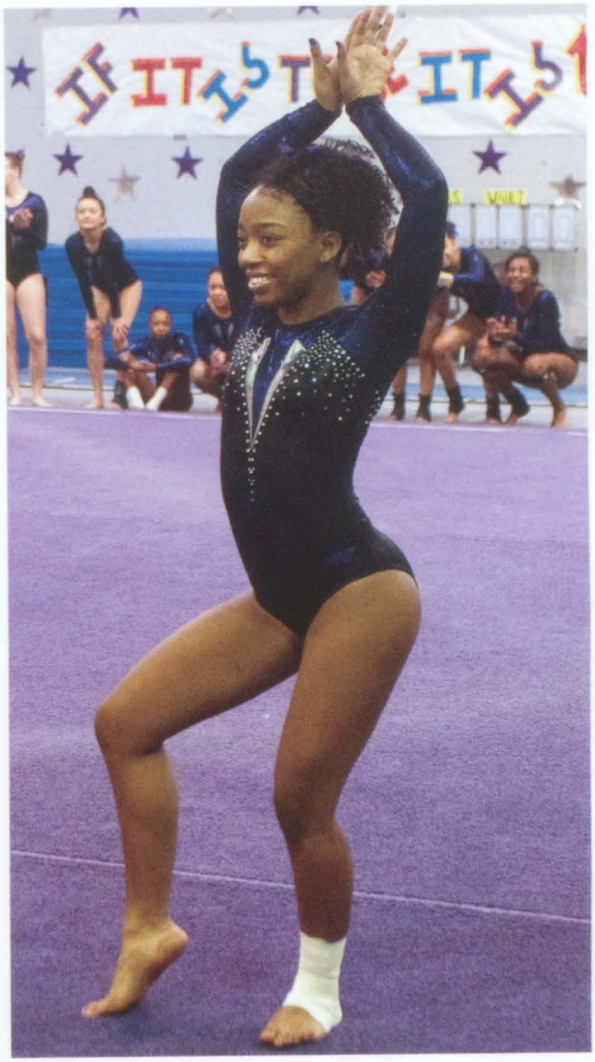
Heather Osorio

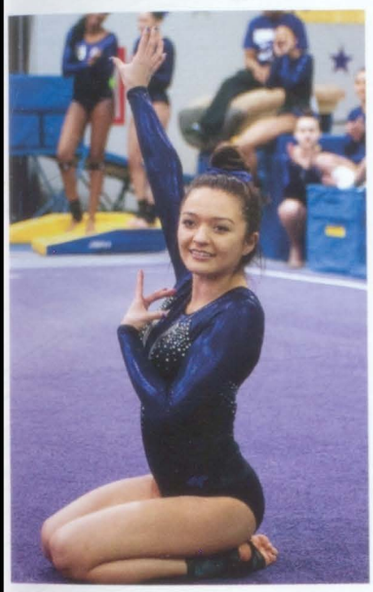
Most Improved

Ke'Leica Junigan

At the end of her floor routine, Senior Mikayla Harmon turns toward the judge to show her personality. Although Harmon's best event is the beam, she enjoys the bars because it gives her the same rush as a rollercoaster. "Before the meets, I try not to think about the stress," Harmon said.







On the floor, Junior Sabrina Sanchez waits for her music to play. Sanchez said that wanting to make her team proud helps her keep focus. Sanchez scored 7.125 on beam at sectionals. "Our bond is really close," Sanchez said. "Even outside of gymnastics, they always have my back."

Top Left: Near the end of her routine, Sophomore Heather Osorio performs a switch side sushanova. "Going to state by myself was nerve-wracking," Osorio said. "But it gave me the experience I will need for next season." Osorio scored a 9.0 on floor at state. Top Right: Getting ready to complete a shoot over release skill, Junior Bethany Rochefort swings onto the bar. Rochefort influenced her team as captain by leading by example. "I stayed focused during my events by thinking about what I'm doing and zoning people out," Rochefort said. Bottom Right: After her second tumble pass, Junior Hunter Kaiser completes a wolf jump. Kaiser was named captain this year along with Rochefort. "I felt honored when I was named captain," Kaiser said.

With her arms in the air, Senior Jannel Boyd pauses before her last tumble pass. To prepare herself and her teammates for their meets, Boyd said she likes to make everyone laugh to release tension. At sectionals, Boyd scored 34.325 all-around. "My favorite event is floor because I love to show my personality," Boyd said. "It's also my best event." Coach Diane Roberts said Boyd's routine became a fan favorite throughout the state.

Gymnasts strive for perfection

In order to make the cut on the gymnastics team, the girls have to be prepared to put a great amount of time and effort into their routines and be able to work through tough situations.

Head Coach Diane Roberts said that gymnastics requires endurance and the ability to perform various techniques at practices and meets.

"Gymnastics is a challenging sport you can always improve in," Junior Bethany Rochefort said. "There are always new tricks to learn."

During practices, Coach Roberts tries to get the girls to increase the difficulty of their skill level while perfecting each skill.

"At practice, we would do each of our routines for the events," Senior Jannel Boyd said. "If our routine did not meet Coach Roberts' expectations, we did it again until we improved."

The girls faced the challenge of losing one of their teammates to injury.

"At the DAC meet, I tore my ACL," Rochefort said. "That just tells me that when the next season starts, I have to work twice as hard to regain my position on the team."

With Rochefort's injury, Coach Roberts had to fill in the varsity spots.

"Due to Rochefort's and other injuries in the varsity roster, our team's two gymnasts had to act as replacements," Coach Roberts said. "The gymnasts worked extremely hard in their new roles."

The team placed sixth in sectionals. Sophomore Heather Osorio advanced from regionals by scoring a 9.45 on bars and floor. Osorio competed in the state championship scoring a 9.025 on bars and a 9.0 on floor.

"State was a challenge because it was just me competing," Osorio said, "and that was scary."

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Michigan City	W	105.65-105.625
Hobart	W	101.90-61.00
Lowell	W	101.90-76.05
Lake Central	W	105.15-93.40
LaPorte	W	105.125-67.925
Portage	L	109.20-106.975
Crown Point	W	108.85-106.85
Chesterton	W	106.675-105.150
Valparaiso	L	112.125-106.25
DAC		3rd
Sectionals		4th

Season Record
7-2

Top Left: Eyes focused, Sophomore Jonah Jackson scans for an open teammate. "What surprises most people when they play us is havoc and our intensity," Jackson said. Jackson said no matter what, the team still plays hard. Jackson scored 45 percent of his field goals. Bottom Left: Before he shoots the ball, Junior Marcel Cherry races past the opposing players. "The season highlight for me was when we beat Penn by 13 points on senior night," Cherry said. Cherry had a total of 192 points and 90 assists this season. Below: Dodging his opponent, Sophomore Cameron Wilbon drives to the basket. "Coach Lux told us that the game is never over until the final buzzer, so I play hard all the time," Wilbon said. During the season, Wilbon made a total of 13 blocks and 28 steals.

On a fast break, Junior Demond Wilkins Jr., attempts to shoot a layup. "When we played Highland, we had an expectation to beat them by at least 30 points," Wilkins said. The Pirates defeated Highland by 50 points with a score of 85-35. This season in the starting position for all the games, Wilkins averaged 14 points per game.

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
South Bend	W	70-58
Highland	W	85-35
Bishop Noll	W	66-60
Andrean	W	68-50
North Judson	W	75-25
Chesterton	W	56-55
Crown Point	W	60-59
Portage	W	69-52
Noblesville	L	57-50
Valparaiso	L	61-56
Lowell	W	81-71
Lake Central	L	48-46
Munster	L	51-50
LaPorte	W	61-45
Michigan City	L	65-62
Hobart	W	65-50
Morgan Twp.	W	72-54
Penn	W	74-61
Sectional		
Hobart	W	66-54
Chesterton	L	70-68

Season Record
14-6

Players draft new transition

Preparing for the season's challenges, the boys put in a lot of work starting in the summer.

"(Coach T. J.) Lux had us doing drills, such as shooting and endurance and especially defense," Sophomore Cameron Wilbon said. "It helped the whole team defensively."

"We kept putting in work," Sophomore Mitchell Ward said. "There's no such thing as an off season."

During a tournament early in the season, the team faced their first loss.

"It was a close game, but it helped us play harder individually and helped us stay on the same page during the season," Senior Ramone Atkins Frazier said.

Atkins Frazier and Vejer Cox were the only seniors on the team.

The team did face some challenges that set them back.

"We're getting better every day," Assistant Coach Brian Fogarty said early in the season. "We are still trying to identify who and what we are."

Putting more focus on their plays, the team began a winning streak in the middle of the season.

"The team success is important. I must give to the team in order to get something in return," Cox said.

Team members said they showed each other respect on and off court.

"We treat each other like family, and we always look after each other," Freshman Zion Young said.

The team won the first round of sectionals against Hobart. But, in the second round, they lost by two points to Chesterton, a Duneland Conference team they had beaten by one point during the season.

"We could have talked more on defense," Sophomore Jonah Jackson said. "But it is going to make us work harder and practice harder."

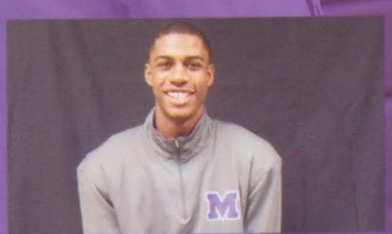
Most Valuable Player

Demond Wilkins Jr.

Leadership

Ramone Atkins Frazier

Sportsmanship



Vejer Cox

Most Improved

James Walters III

In the "Battle of Broadway" against Andrean, Junior Jairus Stevens goes up for a dunk. "When I dunk, I just want to tear the rim up and get my team hype," Stevens said. Stevens said he feels he is versatile when it comes to basketball. "I think my biggest contribution to the team is my versatility because I can rebound, score and assist," Stevens added.

Most Valuable Player

Victoria Gaines

Leadership

Jaz Talley

Sportsmanship

Erika McClinton

Most improved

Ashiala Jackson

While dribbling the ball back onto the court, forward Junior Erika McClinton tries to get in position to shoot the rebound during the South Bend St. Joseph game. McClinton said the opposing team "did everything to perfection. That was our first home game and we lost, but we learned many lessons." Final score was 65-52. McClinton led the team with 217 rebounds.

To shoot a floater during the Lake Central game, Sophomore Jasmine Wright combines a mini jump shot and a lay-up. Wright said her strengths are her speed and ball handling abilities. Wright credits the fans for inspiring her team. "Just by seeing the crowd motivates the team," she said. The team lost to Lake Central, 55-41. Wright averaged 11 points per game.

Above: On the home court, small forward Sophomore Miracle Akins defends against Crown Point's Hannah Albrecht. Akins described herself as a tenacious player who uses her speed "to get to a spot before the opponent." The team beat Crown Point at home 61-39. Bottom Right: Using her height as an advantage, Senior Victoria Gaines shoots a layup. "It's hard for people to guard me because I'm so tall," Gaines said. She plays all positions, although her main position is small forward. "I enjoy basketball," Gaines said. "It is a stress reliever." Gaines averaged 11 points per game. Bottom Left: As she dips past her opponents, point/shooting guard Junior Diamond Harvey drives toward the basket. "I am very fast," Harvey said. "I can get through anyone with my speed. It's a good and a bad thing. Sometimes I can't control my speed," Harvey said.

Off-court bonds create chemistry on court

Team members and their coach credit inspirational teammates and team bonding for their successful season.

"Team bonding is where you go over to someone's house or the entire team goes out somewhere and we eat, play and have fun," Sophomore Jasmine Wright said.

Since the girls have been bonding with each other more often, they said they now see the more experienced players as inspirations.

"My inspirational teammate is CoCo [Senior Victoria Gaines]. She works hard and she is a great leader. Coco is very versatile on the court and she is really great on the defensive end as well," said Junior Miracle Akins. Junior Erika McClinton agreed.

The players credit Coach Amy Govert for their success.

"She's a good mentor, more like a mom. I'm able to talk to her about a lot of things, like when I need someone to talk to about anything basketball related or anything personal. She cares for us like we're her daughters," Gaines said.

The coaches said that the season had good memories.

"My most memorable moment was our win against South Bend Washington, when Jasmine shot the three-pointer in the last second," Coach Govert said.

The coach said she feels as if the bond the team had this year benefited them.

"The inspiration and bonding absolutely helped, especially with girls. The closer they are, the better they play," Coach Govert said.

Team chemistry proved to be helpful in the long run. The girls repeated as sectional champion and won the regional.

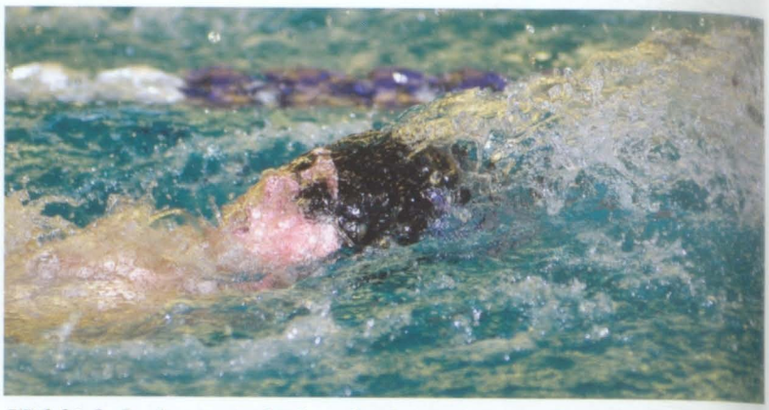
"Going to semi-state this year helped me gain more confidence in myself as a player," Sophomore Kiarra Thompson said, "and it helped me know that I could depend on my teammates for sure."

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Andrean	W	45-40
South Bend St. Joseph	L	65-52
Fort Wayne	L	70-60
Valparaiso	W	53-42
Greenfield	L	49-44
Lake Central	L	55-41
Elkhart Memorial	W	51-31
LaPorte	L	64-47
Michigan City	W	81-56
Columbus North	L	58-41
Penn	W	48-46
Chesterton	W	46-34
South Bend	W	66-64
Crown Point	W	61-39
Hobart	W	59-31
Portage	W	64-39
Lowell	W	71-31
Northridge	W	50-40
Kankakee Valley	W	75-41
Sectional		
Crown Point	W	43-34
LaPorte	W	65-51
Valparaiso	W	65-37
Warsaw	W	48-36
Regional		
Lake Central	W	58-49
Semi-state		
Homestead	L	66-52

Season Record
18-7

Striving to finish in first place, Senior Gregory Vega Jr. speeds through the water as he swims the freestyle. "My strategy is to go as fast as I can so that I can get first place every time," Vega said. Vega finished the 200 yard race in 2:21. He said that he prepares for a meet by conditioning and eating right to get more energy.



With his body almost completely under the water, Junior Brian Baran swims the backstroke. "I try to listen to music to get me focused before a swim meet," Baran said. He swam in the 400 yard freestyle relay, which placed sixth with a time of 3:46.

Left: On his back with his left arm in the air, Freshman Tavion Wheeler strives to finish in under seven seconds. "Before a meet, I try to rest as much as possible," Wheeler said. He has been swimming since sixth grade and said that his main priority is staying focused. Top Right: As he splashes through the water, Sophomore Alexis Lopez swims the freestyle. "My goal is to place in the top 12 at sectionals," Lopez said. He completed the 500 yard freestyle in 5:53. Before a meet, Lopez said that he tries to calm down and create a serious mindset. Bottom Right: While swimming the 100 butterfly, Junior Joshua Hiller splashes through the water. "To prepare for a meet, I listen to music to keep my mind clear," Hiller said. He completed the 100 yard butterfly in 1:00. Hiller said that staying focused keeps him competitive, and that he always eats an orange before a meet.

Scoreboard

Opponent	Loss	Score
Portage	L	128-57
Rensselaer	W	106-70
Lake Central	L	143.5-41.5
Highland	L	118-67
Hobart	W	108-73
Crown Point	L	111-73
Griffith	W	97-51
Kankakee Valley	L	98-82
Lowell	L	115-65
Valparaiso	L	142-41
Michigan City	L	117-59
LaPorte	L	124-62
Bishop Noll	W	120-57
Wheeler	W	112-62
Chesterton	L	137-49
DAC		8th
Sectionals		7th

Season Record
5-10

Swimmers create a lane all their own

The boys' swimming and diving team dove into the new season with fresh teammates and new hopes for personal improvements. Comparing to the performances in past years, the team strived to improve as much as they possibly could as individuals, obtain a better record and motivate each other throughout everything that they do.

Captain Senior Gregory Vega Jr. said he held high hopes for the boys.

"I wanted to have a better season record than we did last year and to have everyone return to the second round in sectionals," Vega said.

Several swimmers advanced to the second day of the Chesterton Sectional. Junior Joshua Hiller, Sophomore Alexis Lopez and Senior Gregory Vega Jr. advanced in personal events, along with the 200 medley relay and the 200 and 400 freestyle relay teams.

While the team celebrated wins and endured losses, individuals achieved and surpassed their goals.

Freshman Edmund Gunn Jr.'s goal for this season was to make varsity.

"I believed that I had the potential to make varsity, so I pushed myself as much as I could to achieve my goal," Gunn said.

Other swimmers and divers had other goals in mind. Junior Joshua Hiller said that his goals for the season were to get under one minute on the 100 butterfly event and maintain a varsity level of competition for the rest of the year.

"To achieve this goal, I have to work harder in practice, adopt a better nutrition or eating habits and work harder on the overall technique of butterfly until I perfect it," Hiller said.

By the end of the season he achieved his goals.

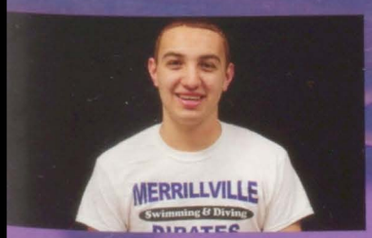
Sophomore Joseph Harris II pushed himself to higher expectations of being an overall better swimmer.

"I worked harder in practice, pushed myself more in meets or competitions and talked to head Coach [Ladd] Downham about what I can improve on to get better after every personal event in meets," Harris said.

Coach Downham said he wasn't concerned as much with the team's overall record of wins and losses. As long as everyone tried to achieve their best times, attacked in every race, and attempted to show a perfect technique so they could eventually improve, he said that he was happy.

"Sometimes it's not about you winning every event in meets," Coach Downham said. "Sometimes it's about what improvements you make in the event to make you overall better next time."

Most Valuable Swimmer



Gregory Vega Jr.

Leadership

Brian Baran

Sportsmanship

Wesley Babilonia

Most Improved

Joshua Hiller

Aiming to perfect his technique, Junior Wesley Babilonia swims the breaststroke. "To prepare for the season I work out and stay fit. There is always room for improvement," Babilonia said. He was a part of the 200 yard medley relay team that finished in seventh place with a time of 1:53.

Most Valuable Swimmer

Robin Townsend

Leadership

Hannah Sawyer

Sportsmanship

Ebonie Ali

Most Improved

Fabienne Laursich

While swimming the 100 yard freestyle race, Senior Robin Townsend swims the breaststroke. "I try to be fast off the block and kick hard," Townsend said. She said her desire to advance in sectionals kept her motivated throughout the season. During sectionals in the 50 yard freestyle, she placed 7th, and in the 100 freestyle, she placed 11th.

Looking at her time after her 50 yard freestyle, Sophomore Ebonie Ali hopes her timing is better than her opponent's. Her coaches and other lane mates motivate her to do well and get good times. "I try to set goals and get specific times that I want throughout the season," Ali said.

After springing from the diving board, Senior Morgan Harris rotates her body into a front somersault half twist. Harris said she pictures herself doing the dive before actually doing it. "I just wing it and stay focused, squeeze my core and point toes," Harris said. She tries to practice all the dives she struggles with during morning practices.

Above Left: With her whole body in the water, Freshman Carly Gubitz swims in the 50 yard freestyle race. Talking to her teammates in the hallway and in the locker room helps her stay focused before a meet. "I try to keep my feet together and my arms fast during the meets," Gubitz said. Below: Swimming on the team for the first year, Sophomore Fabienne Laurisch competes in the backstroke race. "My biggest accomplishment this year was getting 29 seconds in the 50 freestyle," Laurisch said. She said that she has the mental attitude to focus on her start and tries to block everything out.

New girls dive into the season

With several new swimmers, the swim team was able to compete with a bigger team.

Underclassmen strong, the team put more emphasis on bonding and team togetherness.

From pasta parties to chats between sets or before a meet, the team found a way to make sure the bond stayed intact.

"Before our first meet, we had a pasta party as a team bonding," freshman Carly Gubitz said. "When in practice or in sets, I get a chance to talk to the people next to me. It's fun."

Two new captains, Senior Robin Townsend and Junior Hannah Sawyer, lead the team.

"In my opinion, it was seniority and who showed great leadership skills," Sawyer said.

The captains said they made sure to keep the swimmers motivated and happy before and after meets and practices.

"We get them in the locker rooms and give them pep talks to make sure they are not down and hype them up," Townsend said.

Several girls advanced out of the preliminary round of sectionals this year and into the finals.

Sawyer advanced in the 200 yard individual medley and the 100 yard backstroke. Townsend advanced in the 50 and 100 yard freestyle races.

Three teams also advanced. The 200 yard medley relay team of Sawyer, Townsend and Sophomores Ebonie Ali and Fabienne Laurisch placed eighth.

The 200 yard freestyle relay team of Junior Angela Terry, Sophmore Breonna Bagget and Freshmen Marsol Rameirez and Prysma Valdivia placed 10th.

Coming in sixth at sectionals was the 400 yard freestyle medley team of Sawyer, Ali, Laurisch and Townsend.

"We had to realize that this was our last meet, so we had to go hard or go home," Townsend said.

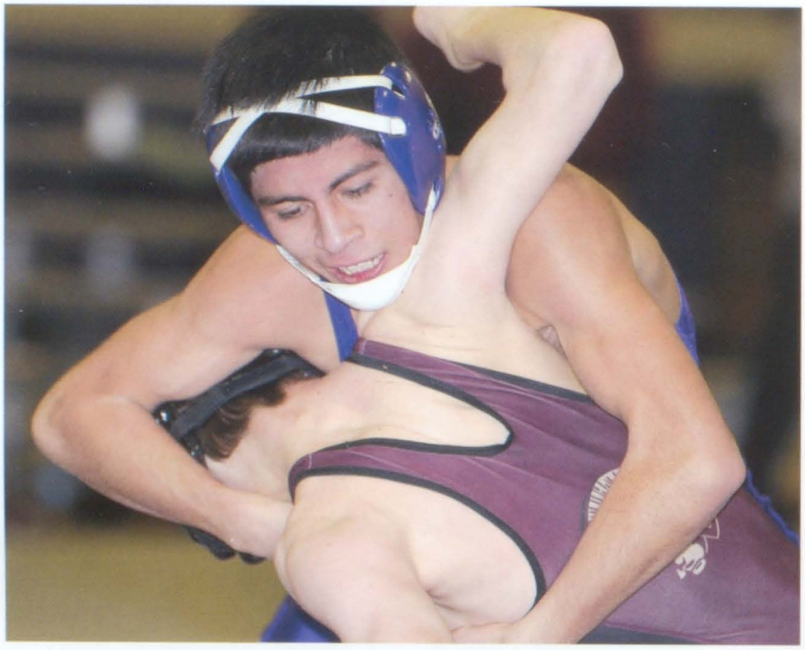
Advancing to the finals was based on the bonding and dedication to teaching the newest members.

"As a team we could have done better. We had a lot of new people and they had to learn," Terry said. "This included what to do and and how to do it, but we all got along well."

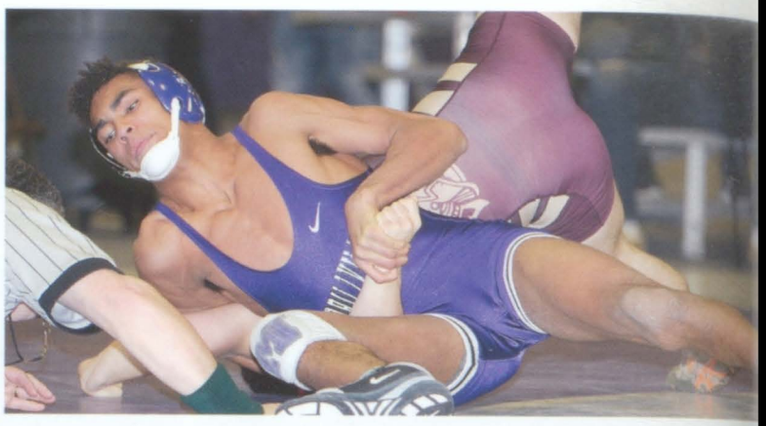
Scoreboard

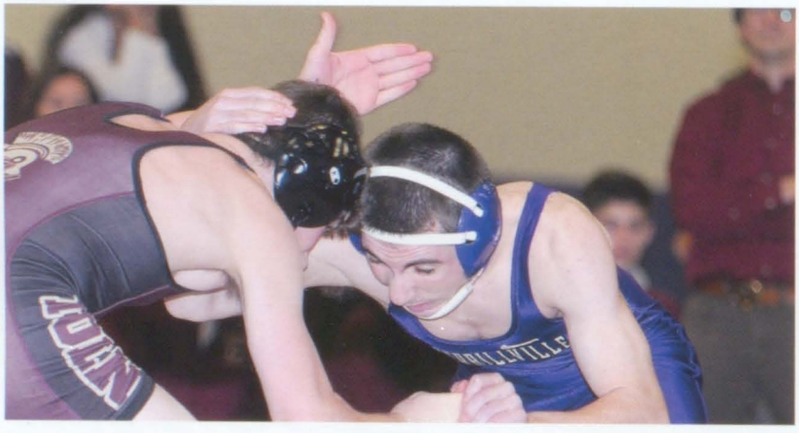
Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Lowell	L	115-65
Chesterton	L	153-32
Portage	L	143-43
Rensselaer	L	125-55
Lake Central	L	148-36
Highland	L	127-56
Hobart	L	120-53
Crown Point	L	144-36
Griffith	W	97-51
Kankakee Valley	L	127-56
Valparaiso	L	146-36
Michigan City	L	146-47
DAC		8th
LaPorte	L	120-56
Bishop Noll	W	105-68
Wheeler	L	103-47
Sectionals		8th

Season Record
2-13



In the bulldog position, Sophomore Michael De La Peña tries to take down Chesterton's Josh Jensen in the 113 weight class. "I needed to open up more on my shots," De Le Peña said. "It would have made my chances to get points greater and I would have gotten more points." De La Peña's goal is to get six points for his team every time he steps on the mat and he accomplished his goal in this meet with a time of 2 minutes and 43 seconds. De La Peña ended his season with a record 35-8.





Top: In the 138 weight class, Senior Clarence Johnson III waits to hear the whistle blow for the pin. "I got the bonus points for the team since I pinned him," Johnson said. Johnson pinned Chesterton's Steve Biancardi in a time of 57 seconds. Johnson finished his final season with a record of 42-5. Bottom: In the spiral position, Senior Jairus Perry wrestles Chesterton's Davielle Stewart in the 195 weight class. "That was senior night so my motivation was to go out and win like every other match, but I had a slow start," Perry said. Perry pinned his opponent in 4 minutes 40 seconds. Perry finished his season with a record of 36-5. Bottom Left: At a home meet against Chesterton, Sophomore Nathan Potter has Jack Tolin in a tie up. "I remember I did pretty bad that meet," Potter said. "I didn't go to my offense." Potter wrestles in the 120 division and lost this match, 8-1. At the end of the season, Potter ended with a record of 17-23.

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Valparaiso	W	40-20
LaPorte Duals		1st
Portage	L	41-22
Tom Cameron Invite		1st
Chesterton	W	50-20
Rich East Tourney		1st
Mishawaka Invite		2nd
Crown Point	L	34-27
Mat Mahem Tourney		2nd
Lake Central	W	42-27
DAC Tourney		3rd
Michigan City	W	68-6
Sectionals		1st
Regionals		2nd
Semi-State		4th
State		4th

Season Record
4-2

Pinning their way to the top

With very few coaches able to remember the last time the Pirates placed third in the Duneland Athletic Conference, Head Coach David Maldonado said he thought his team still did a pretty decent job.

"Crown Point is fourth in state and Portage is fifth and we're sixth, so even though we placed third in DAC, we're still sixth in state. We've all been good this year, just happened to fall short," Coach Maldonado said.

This season, there have been changes in weight classes and many new faces on the varsity team.

Senior Felipe Godinez moved up to varsity in the 106 weight class this, his senior year.

"It was challenging," Godinez said. "You're wrestling more experienced people so I have to push myself ten times harder every day to make myself better."

The Pirates won their 11th straight sectional. They received second at regionals and fourth at semi-state.

Of the 14 wrestlers on the team, 13 advanced to regionals, 10 advanced to semi-state and Sophomore Michael De La Peña, Senior Clarence Johnson III and Juniors Jacob Covaciu and Shawn Streck advanced to state. Streck went into state undefeated with a record of 45-0 at heavyweight.

"Semi-state is something I look forward to every year. There are very intense matches," Streck said. "I did pretty good. I was satisfied on my matches."

At state De La Peña didn't place. Johnson finished his senior season placing sixth. Covaciu and Streck both became state champions.

"It was indescribable. It didn't fully sink in until next day when I woke up," Streck said. "I didn't realize the extraordinary thing I had done the night before until that morning after."

"Winning state is more about making my family and everyone proud of me," Covaciu said, "not of the glory."

Most Valuable Wrestler

Shawn Streck

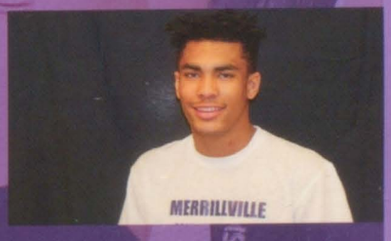
Leadership

Jacob Covaciu

Sportsmanship

Michael De La Peña

Most Improved



Clarence Johnson III

Weighing in at 145, Junior Jacob Covaciu arm bars Chesterton's Brandon Root. "Before each meet, I try to stay relaxed. I don't think about anything. Just go out and wrestle," Covaciu said. Covaciu pinned Root in 1 minute 33 seconds. Covaciu won state with a record of 48-1.

Most Valuable Player

Brendon Bistrican

Leadership

William Ballard

Sportsmanship

Thomas Jones

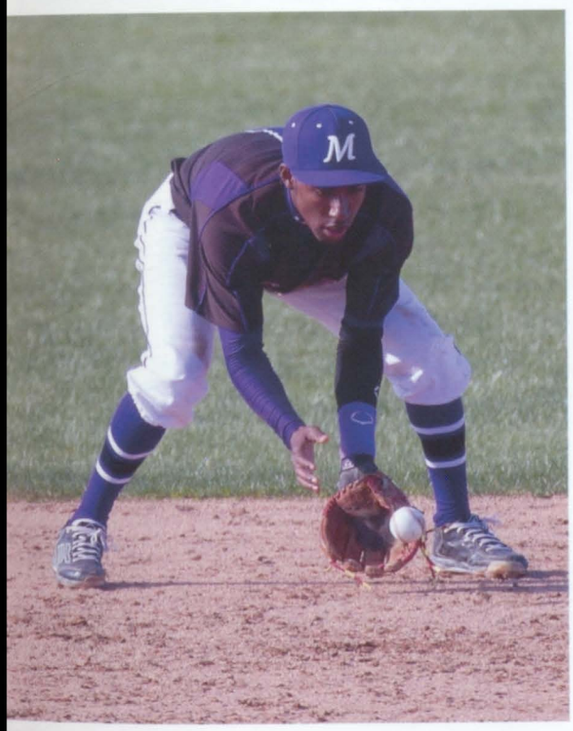
Most Valuable Player

Vejer Cox

After a quick wind-up, Junior Matthew Meux throws a fastball. "This season, we had a greater improvement," Meux said. "My most memorable moment was when I came in as relief in the Hammond Clark game. I got five strike-outs, and we won the game." He said he gives himself at least two hours to practice, outside of practice.

In a pick-off attempt, Senior Vejer Cox catches the ball from Junior Nathan Potter. "My biggest moment was when I went three for three in the Rensselaer game," Cox said. "I got two doubles and one single. I never hit that well in a high school game." Cox started playing baseball when he was nine because his dad wanted to get him into sports. "The most memorable moment for us as a team was when we beat LaPorte. They are one of the best in the state, and they were undefeated in the DAC. Who would have thought we would've been the ones to end their streak."

Behind the home plate, Senior Jonathan Streck catches a pitch. "The catcher's position is the only one I play," Streck said. "I like it because you're always in the game." Streck has been playing baseball since he was four years old.



Above: Up to bat, Senior William Ballard takes a swing. "This year, I think we were more together as a team," Ballard said. "We played harder and we had more chemistry." Ballard said his favorite position to play was center field because he prefers outfield plays. "The most memorable moment for me was when we beat LaPorte. They were number two in the state." Left: Before the inning starts, Junior Thomas Smith fields a ground ball during warm-ups. "I started playing because my dad used to play and convinced me to play," Smith said. "It was the first sport I fell in love with." Smith said the team's chemistry and mindset was better this year. "My favorite position to play is the shortstop position," Smith said. "It's like the captain of the infield."

Family bond helps team win more

Knowing each other better and getting along more helped the team improve.

During the season, players said the time and effort in early morning practices and late nights helped them improve as a team.

"In the mornings, we start stretching, then we throw and the rest of the practice is up to the coaches. Toward the end of morning practice, we condition through running and full-body workouts. Sometimes we lift," first baseman Sophomore Ayron Williams said.

Coaches and players worked together to make players feel that the team was becoming better overall.

"At first, everyone was working by themselves, and once we started to realize that it wasn't working through games, we started coming together in practices and began to perform more as a team, which made us better overall," outfielder Sophomore Carlos Mejia said.

Players said they have accomplished their personal goals and are still working hard to improve.

"My goal for the season was to become a better hitter. I did a lot of t-ball work, and I pushed myself a lot harder when I worked out, and I focused on the mechanics that goes into hitting the ball and remembered that every swing is meaningful," outfielder Junior Chad Deline said.

Teammates say that they feel a sense of family by encouraging each other.

"It's a really comfortable environment. You can really be yourself and have a lot of fun," pitcher Junior Brendon Bistrican said.

Teammates said they had fun throughout the season and have enough memories to last a lifetime.

"My favorite memory was beating Washington Township 12-0, because they beat us last year," infielder Junior Thomas Smith said. "So it felt good getting our payback."

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Hobart	L	17-0
Washington Township	W	12-0
Boone Grove	T	3-3
Munster	L	6-12
Lowell	L	2-12
Highland	L	7-8
Michigan City	W	5-2
LaPorte	L	10-0
Kankakee Valley	L	3-6
Chesterton	L	2-9
Lake Central	L	12-1
Crown Point	L	12-2
Hammond Clark	W	3-2
Portage	L	6-2
Valparaiso	W	3-2
Rensselaer	W	12-2
Michigan City	L	11-1
LaPorte	W	2-1
Chesterton	L	19-8
Lake Central	L	7-1
Crown Point	L	6-3
Wheeler	L	12-7
Morgan Township	L	11-6
Portage	L	7-2
Valparaiso	L	15-3
West Lafayette	L	9-7
West Lafayette	L	12-6
Sectionals		
Hobart	W	8-3
Chesterton	L	14-4

Season record
7-21-1

Top Left: Eyes focused on her catcher, Sophomore Jennifer Villanueva pitches the ball. "I learned two more pitches," Villanueva said. "I learned the knuckle ball and the drop ball." Villanueva has been the varsity pitcher for two years. Top Right: Playing third base, Sophomore Makayla Pearson fields a grounder. "I'd say my challenge is the ball getting hit to me really, really hard and trying to stop it," Pearson said. Bottom Right: With her knee on the ground for better stability and hand-eye coordination, Junior Ireon Smith catches the ball. "At first, it was hard, but I worked my way up to where I am now," Smith said. "Over the summer, I'm going to work twice as hard for my senior year." Smith has been the varsity catcher since her freshman year.

Above: With the bat straight in front of her, Junior Emily Glover bunts the ball. "My hits have become better because I look at the ball more, so I have more contact," Glover said. Glover pitches and plays left field. Bottom: To touch the base before the tag, Junior Kristin McGee slides into the base. "My hitting is more consistent this year," McGee said. "I've hit two home runs outside the park and one inside the park. My hitting has more power this year." McGee plays center field.

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Griffith	L	9-8
Kankakee Valley	L	7-1
East Chicago Central	W	16-3
Bishop Noll	L	7-0
Kouts	W	7-2
Portage	L	16-0
Hebron	W	2-0
Valparaiso	W	6-2
Michigan City	L	4-11
LaPorte	L	3-2
Chesterton	L	12-1
Lake Central	L	10-0
Crown Point	L	12-0
Portage	L	8-2
Valparaiso	L	9-7
Morton	L	10-7
Michigan City	W	0-7
LaPorte	L	9-6
Chesterton	L	12-2
Lake Central	L	16-1
Crown Point	L	10-0
Hobart	L	14-6
Andrean	L	10-4
Hammond	W	13-2
Boone Grove	L	10-0
Lowell	L	8-0
Sectionals		
Crown Point	L	11-1

Season record
6-21

Girls improve softball record

The softball team is in the process of rebuilding in recent years, looking to increase win percentage and, most importantly, be a good softball team.

The coach and her players say the process seems to be heading in the right direction, as things are looking up for the team.

Freshman Alexis Ramos, the only freshman on the varsity team, said she saw improvement in hitting and fielding this year.

"We feel confident," Ramos, the shortstop on the team, said.

Team members say they have improved by hitting, as well as working on fielding and communicating with the rest of the players.

"We have a really great infield and outfield," Ramos said.

The leader behind the motivated team has even higher expectations for next year's team. Coach Kristina Sides, who is not a newcomer to success on the softball diamond, believes that this season is only the start for a great program in the future.

"I honestly think if the girls keep believing, then next year, we will be unstoppable," Coach Sides said.

Coach Sides, a three-year all-conference player in high school, noted the improvement in record from her first season on junior varsity with only two wins to her recent season on varsity with six wins overall, including two conference victories.

Among returning starters for this team is Junior Emily Glover, a pitcher who entered this season as a veteran leader.

"We're playing more as a team and not just there to be there," Glover said.

With team chemistry and a trusting bond between the players, Coach Sides said she believes the team record does not do the team justice.

"Our talent is out of this world and the games we lost just got away from us," Coach Sides said. "Some games, our nerves got the best of us, but it will all change and we will get better next year."

Most Valuable Player

Kristin McGee

Sportsmanship

Makayla Pearson

Leadership

Ireon Smith

Most Improved

Jasmine Sanders

With her arm all the way back for more power, Freshman Alexis Ramos throws the ball home. "I improved on my hitting and communicating more on the field," Ramos said. Ramos plays shortstop and has hit three home runs.

Most Valuable Player

Brian Sales

Leadership

Day'Shoun Robinson

Sportsmanship

Miguel Tapia

Most Improved

Anthony Sams

Baton in hand, Junior Joshua Morando runs the 4x800 relay. "My goal for the season was to go 2:10 in the 800 meters," Morando said. He met this goal by one second, running a 2:09.

Above: Diving head first over the bar, Senior Desmond Thomas competes in the high jump. "My goals for the season were to improve in all my events," Thomas said. Thomas placed first at sectionals for the high jump at 6 feet, 2 inches. Below: Eyes focused on the finish line, Junior Jordan Young runs an individual race. "I really like the competitiveness of track and field and also, my teammates," Young said. Young was a member of the 4x400-meter relay team that advanced to the state.

After running, Senior Darwind Chism sticks his landing in the long jump. "My favorite part of track and field is being with my teammates and getting better," Chism said. "We practiced every day."

With the shot put against his neck, Senior Payton Ash prepares to throw. "I just want to go out and do my best every time," Ash said. Ash did not compete in sectionals due to an ankle injury.

Above: In the air, Sophomore Mouhamed Diallo leaps over the hurdle. "This was my first year hurdling, and at first, I couldn't do it," Diallo said. "But now, I'm a lot better at it." Below: With the pole in his hands, Junior Adam Serros pushes himself over the bar. "My favorite part is when I'm pole vaulting because I like the thrill of being in the air," Serros said. Serros said he improved during his first season on the team.

Injuries put aside to achieve goals

Injuries that plagued members of the boys' track team kept them from achieving their goal of improving over last year.

"We had a very talented group of runners this season, but we were just hampered by injuries," Coach Patrick Coffey said.

Although this limited what the team could do in certain categories, they were still able to push through the season.

"At practice, we put in a lot of work. Our runners run for 30 minutes before practice and everyone just works extremely hard," Senior Jordan Baldwin said.

This strategy was enough to win two invitationals, even without key players.

"It's been inconsistent, but I prepare the guys for meets and make sure they know everything they need to know," Coach Coffey said.

Despite a rocky season when they stuggled to post a win, the postseason saw the team experience their most successes. Three members of the team scored personal bests during sectionals.

Senior Jordan Downs broke the school record set in 2013 by Austin Jamerson. The new record is 23 feet, 7 inches. Senior Desmond Thomas set a personal record in long jump at 20 feet, 9.50 inches. Senior Brian Sales posted 48.93 seconds in the 4x400-meter relay.

At regionals, the team captured third place and advanced several athletes to the state finals.

Coach Coffey remained optimistic and said he was excited for the athletes who advanced.

"We're going to try to make a run for the state title. The goal is to run as a team, at least the top five. Anything could happen," he said. "I am trying my best to keep them calm and collected about it, as focused and relaxed as possible."

In the long jump, Downs came in fifth. Sales came in second in the 400-meter dash. Thomas and Senior Garrett Ferrell placed 12th and 15th respectively in the pole vault. The 4x400 team of Senior Day'Shoun Robinson, Junior JoRale Wheeler, Junior Jordan Young and Sales placed 11th.

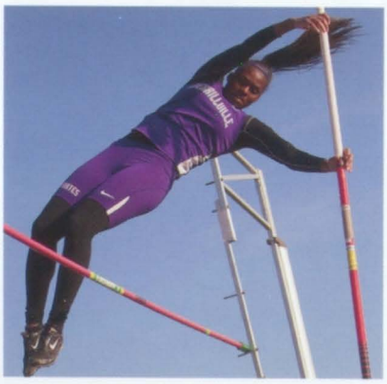
Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Lowell Invite		1st
New Haven Invite		3rd
Tri-Meet		
Crown Point	L	72-60
Lake Central	L	69-63
Vernon Hills		1st
Tri-Meet		
LaPorte	L	79-53
Portage	L	71-61
Tri-Meet		
Valparaiso	L	82-45
Michigan City	L	82.5-49.5
Lime City Relays		3rd
Chesterton	L	63-69
DAC		8th
Sectionals		3rd
Regionals		3rd

Season Record
0-7

Above: Listening to music, Senior Camille Ochoa and teammates complete a warm-up before the 4x800 relay race. The relay team placed second in sections. "All the girls, from the throw side to the sprint side, are nice," Ochoa said. "They cheer you on whether you're doing good or not. We are always there for each other." Below: In a spin, Senior Jordan Stanley prepares to throw the discus. At sectionals, Stanley placed first in the shot put and third in the discus. "I like setting goals and reaching them," Stanley said. "The more goals I meet, the more I get motivated."

Jumping over the hurdle, Freshman Destiny Washington runs the 100 hurdles. Washington said that her most memorable moment was when she fell while running the 300 hurdles but still came in first place. Washington placed fifth place in the 300-meter hurdles during sectionals. "I started running hurdles after I trained with Coach Coffey at Pierce," Washington said. "He told me I will be good at it."



In the air, Senior Jaz Talley completes her vault. Talley said that she started pole vaulting her freshman year because she promised Nakel McClinton she would try it. "Pole vaulting is easy for me," Talley said. "I just sit back and breathe."

Above: Coming out of the box, Sophomore Carnisa Laster tries to run her best race against her competitors. Laster placed in the top ten for the 400-meter dash during sectionals. "I listen to gospel music to get my mind right," Laster said. "The finish line is my motivation." Below: In a sprint around the curve, Senior Malika Sweeny runs the 400-meter dash. Sweeny placed in the top ten in sectionals for the 400-meter dash. "It's a challenge trying to keep form as I run when I am tired," Sweeny said. "But I just keep pushing myself until I can't anymore."

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Tri-Meet		
Lake Central	L	91-41
Crown Point	L	69-63
Veron Hills		3rd
Tri-Meet		
Valparaiso	L	86-46
Michigan City	W	85-45
Lime City Relays		4th
Chesterton	W	68-64
DAC		6th
Sectionals		3rd

Season Record
2-3

Girls make a fresh start

Change came in the form of a new head coach this track season. Taking over for former head coach Mr. Jeffery Fairbairn, history teacher Mrs. Kelley Kratz introduced a new way of coaching.

When offered the position, Coach Kelly Kratz immediately knew this was an offer she could not let pass.

"When the position was offered to me, it was pretty hard to turn down, so I had to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses so I could build off what we need to improve upon," Coach Kratz said.

Despite this change, the girls were able to connect with their new head coach in different ways.

"She changed a lot. She changed the workouts and how our practices work," Junior Alivia Ash said. "She is really supportive and she brings us food and gives us rides. She cares about us."

"She was more involved. She checked more than just grades, and she was easier to talk to because she is a woman," Junior Jordan McDonald said.

After becoming more accustomed to the new coach, the Lady Pirates began preparing for sectionals, regionals and the state championships. To do this, the team relied on the leadership of the seniors on the team.

"Seniors are the leaders because they try their hardest to set a good example," McDonald said.

The team place third in sectionals but did not advance as a team.

Senior Jordan Stanley placed first in regionals for shot put. Junior Alivia Ash placed second in the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 16.30. She also advanced to the regionals and the state championship along with Stanley.

"I'm excited. I think I will do better because I'm more confident with my jumps," Ash said. "My goal is to make top four, but I want to work my way to number one."

Ash came in second in the high jump and Stanley placed 11th in the shot put.

Most Valuable Athlete

Jordan Stanley

Leadership

Ebony Harris

Sportsmanship

Christian Gridiron

Most Improved

Crystal Cabrera

With her right arm stretching back, Senior Ebony Harris reaches for the baton from Freshman Jasmine Beamon. Harris participated in the 100- and 200-meter dash for varsity and the 4x400-meter dash for junior varsity. "I joined track because of my brother, and I like to compete," Harris said.

Most Valuable Golfer

Elijah Royal

Leadership

Marcus Norton

Sportsmanship

Michael Robinson

Most Improved

Keith Rochefort Jr.

As he prepares to putt, Senior Michael Robinson reads the green. "I joined because I thought golf was fun. I like being outdoors," Robinson said. "I've been playing for years."

After he hits his drive, Freshman Keith Rochefort Jr. looks to see where the ball lands on the fairway. "My dad got me started on golf, and we play together." Although he doesn't plan to pursue a professional career in golf, he said his favorite part about the sport is meeting new people.

Hitting off the tee, Sophomore Elijah Royal uses a follow-through motion to drive the ball. "I do plan on making a career out of golf," Royal said. "It could get me a college scholarship."

With a steady hand and eye, first-year golfer Senior Justin Griffin putts in an early season tri-meet against Wheeler and Whiting. "I think about how good my driving game is, but the short game is where it's at," Griffin said. Griffin said the team suffered minor setbacks and mistakes, but they have been heading in the right direction.

In order to achieve height on his shot, Sophomore Marcus Norton hits the ball with his sand wedge. Norton said his toughest opponent was Crown Point because they've gone to state every year. He does plan on making a career out of the sport. "There is a lot a lot of money in golf, and I can do it for a long time."

Golfers drive forward to improve

The golf team's season goals were made up around pinpointing different areas to work on in practices and improve on them.

"They can improve on club selection, course management and knowing what club to use while playing a certain hole," Head Coach Patti Tubbs said.

Most of the team members were able to find out what their strengths and weaknesses were during practices and matches, even some from years before, to already know what needed the most focus.

"My freshman year, I played a match against a guy named Mike Lee," Senior Michael Robinson said. "And he was a lot better than me since he could always see my mistakes. From that, he gave me some advice on how I could do better."

However, one student went from one sport to another for his last year.

"I have played football since I was little and made the team when I started high school," Senior Justin Griffin said. "After football was over, I decided to try out golf."

Griffin said that he had to have a lot of practice and focus on maintaining low scores and was able to do better.

"Justin Griffin improved because he went from swinging a club really hard to taking some lesson," Coach Ben Daniel said.

Hours of practice did not solely help in the team's improvements. The coaches were always with them to help as best as they could.

"They would always give us motivation, and they would give us advice and some tips to help us play," Griffin said.

In the end, the coaches said they believed the boys had done better, even though not all of the season's goals were achieved.

"It's been fun so far working with the team, and we definitely have the members," Coach Daniel said. "We just need to be focused and pull together."

Top Left: With her eyes focused on the ball, Senior Allyssa Mihal hits the ball back across the net. Mihal said her strengths are backhand, forehand and her communication on the court. "My communication can sometimes also be my weakness when I'm on the court," Mihal said. She said she practices a lot before and during the season. She goes to the gym to work out and hits balls before her matches. Top Right: Eyes fixed on the incoming serve, Junior Claribell Quinones hits the ball in a forehand ground stroke. "My coaches motivate me by telling me that I can do well every match and that I have the potential to win," Quinones said. She said one of her strengths is being consistent and staying focused throughout her match. Quinones advanced into the individual sectional after beating her opponent in the team sectional. Bottom Left: With the ball in hand, Senior Mariana Cantu gets ready to serve. "Since it's my senior year, I have to put my all into every match and try my hardest," Cantu said. Cantu practices her serves to get in the game mindset before each game. "Overall, we had a good season and I'm glad the team bonded," Cantu said. "We are a big family." Bottom Right: To return the serve, Junior Erika McClinton uses a backhand stroke. "What challenges me the most is when I'm serving and I use the wrong technique because it's easier," McClinton said. She said watching other teams, including Valparaiso and Southern Indiana, play motivates her because they're really good and it seems like they do everything perfectly. "I just work hard and practice every day, even when I'm tired," McClinton said.

Scoreboard

Opponent	Win/Loss	Score
Highland	L	3-2
Boone Grove	L	3-2
Lowell	L	3-2
Hobart	W	3-2
LaPorte	L	5-0
Whiting	L	4-1
Valparaiso	L	5-0
Portage	L	5-0
Chesterton	L	4-1
Wheeler	L	3-2
Lake Central	L	5-0
Kankakee Valley	L	4-1
Crown Point	L	5-0
Andrean	L	4-1
Michigan City	L	4-1
Sectionals	L	3-2

Season Record
1-15

Striving to win on the courts

The season challenged the team to focus and stay consistent.

Practicing every day, the team worked their hardest to achieve their goals. Although the competition was tough, the girls knew how important it was to be prepared for their matches.

"Working on our serves and footwork has helped us compete better in our matches," Junior Mariah Jimenez said.

To have a successful season, communication was a key factor. Team bonding also had an impact on how well the girls communicated with one another.

"We do two team bonding before season starts," Senior Rahma Safraoui said. "It helps us get to know each other more and connect better during competition."

When preparing for a match, the girls have one thing in mind: winning.

"The most exciting part about playing is winning a match," Senior Mariana Cantu said. "It shows with all my hard work. I accomplished something great."

After their final season of high school tennis, players are looking forward to playing in college.

"I'm looking forward to playing club tennis at Spellman College in Atlanta," Senior Amber Dawning said, and Safraoui agreed.

"I've been playing tennis for five years. I don't plan on stopping anytime soon," Safraoui said. "Playing club tennis is my chance to continue."

Although the girls' tennis team lost in round two of sectionals, Juniors Erika McClinton and Claribell Quinones and Senior Cynthia Basu-Chavez moved on to individual sectionals.

Quinones played number one singles and is the top player on the team.

"She held the position with grace and integrity," Head Coach Stofko said, "despite the overwhelming competition she had not experienced before."

Most Valuable Player

Claribell Quinones

Leadership

Cynthia Basu-Chavez

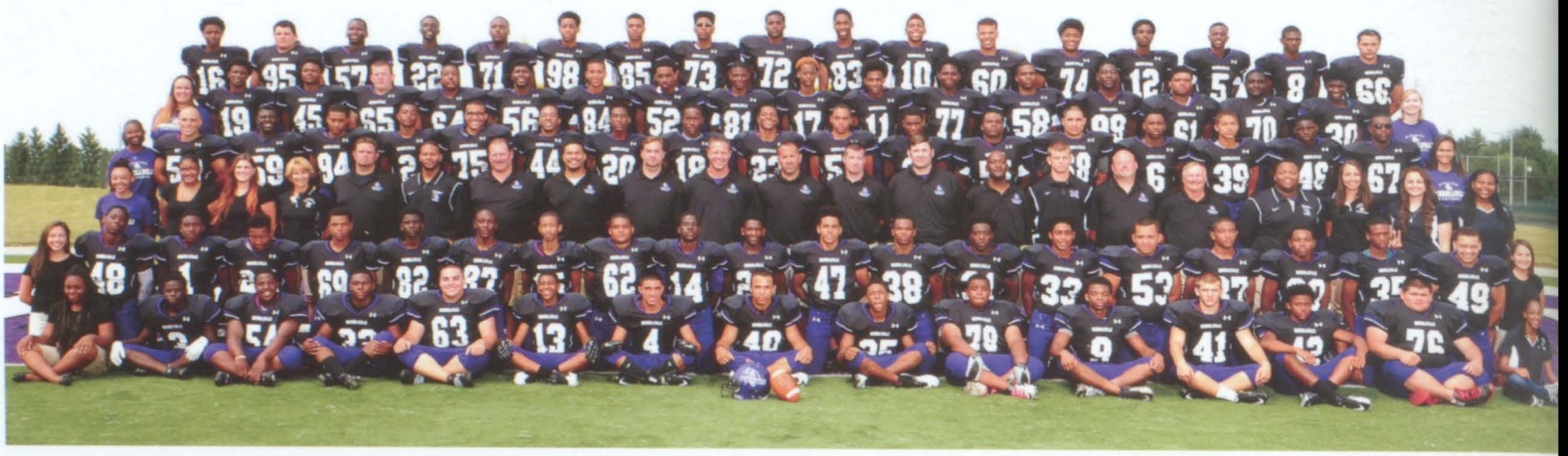
Sportsmanship

Erika McClinton

Most Improved

Mariah Jimenez

Approaching the net, Senior Cynthia Basu-Chavez tries getting a more aggressive shot in order to get the point. The motivation from her partner makes her do better at her match. "It's my senior year and I'm a captain, so it's now or nothing," Basu-Chavez said. Before each of her matches, she comes in early to practice with one of her coaches. "I want to have a high winning percentage and not to worry just about the game, but about the team, too," Basu-Chavez said.



Varsity Football
Coach: Zac Wells
Front row: Brianna Brown, Donovan Carpenter, Willie Williams IV, Elijah Ray, Oscar Cabrera, Ivan Cook Jr., Adam Serros, Devon Harmon, Alex Carter III, Blake Turley, Timothy Johnson Jr., Branden Bramson, Aaron Woodson, Daniel Pole III, Raemere Mitchell; Second row: Mariana Cantu, Keith Green, Terrance Grayson, Moses Johnson Jr., Dewayne Holbrook, DaiQuan Ford, Jerry Justin, Justus Alexander, Donyel Borom, Thomas Jones, Brandon James, Dewrell Hobson III, Daniel Eldridge, Kamau Richardson, Thomas Butler Jr., Jakoby Perry, Antonio Balducci, Anthony Banks, John Ohiani-Jegede, Michael Williams, Alice Canchola; Third row: Madison Blackwell, Jomaria Burns, Chloe Nelson, Susan Hayes, Coach Joshua Sabinas, Coach Anthony Curry, Coach Joesph Atria, Coach Sean Kinsey, Coach William Crosby, Coach Wells, Coach Brian Parker, Coach Joe O'Connell, Coach Jacob Stafford, Coach Jarrett Jordan, Coach Connor Buxton, Coach Frank Kilander, Coach Dennis Hamilton, Coach Robert Gardner, Dana Deloian, Angelica Navarro, Kayla Grant; Forth row: Dominique Bland, Eein Harmon, Isaiah Davis, Ryan Taylor, Sean Roche', Alphonso Blackwell III, Davon Smith, TiShawn Steele, Jonathan Robinson, Isaiah Thornton, Aaron Lott, Myles Taylor, Evin Kennedy, Matthew Malon, James Walters III, Romeo Hoover, Kejuan Thomas, Jay'lon Gordon, Cynthia Gomez; Fifth row: Rachel Galante, Tyreece Jones, Anthony Sams Jr., Andrew Vander Woude, Justin Giffin, Cantrell Henderson, Carlos Mejia, Jalen Williams, Michael Pearson Jr., Kenyatta Smith, James Kirklen Jr., Brandon Williams, Alfred Stubbs Jr., Darwind Chism, Joesph Turley, Karl Riley Jr., Matthew Thompson, Ashley Mendez; Last row: Desmond Thomas, Shawn Streck, Dijonte Davis, Mouhamed Diallo, Cameron Dunlap, Kameron Jackson, Adam Neal, Milan Trajkovski, Quinten Barnslater Jr., Matthew Sims, Ramone Atkins, Jairus Stevens, Ray-Quan Hampton, Anthony Tucker Jr., Demond Wilkins Jr., JoRale Wheeler, Nicolas Pirtle.

Freshman Football
Coaches: Robert Robinson, Hank Kilander, Connor Buxton
Front row: Keelan Outlar, Marcus Hayes, Dwayne King, Maurice Thomas, Robert Adams, Darrion Parker, Keylian Brown, Khalil Porter, Wayan Caldwell; Second row: Tylum Moncreace, Justin Gamble, Aaron Griggs, Ervin Bryan, Airron Blissett, Josiah Anderson, Xavier Griffin, Kendall Johnson, Kameron Flowers, Adrian Fraziwer; Third row: Tyler Anderson, Jorge Parra, Michael Shell, Zaire Moss, Coach Robinson, Coach Kilander, Coach Buxton, Dennis Weston, Robert Williams, Maxwell Govert, Brett Norton; Fourth row: Angelo Torres, Dontrell Pope, Joesph Aponte, Davion Ervin-Poindexter, Ryan Smith, Ryan Atkins Frazier, Kevin Carter, Max Benkert, Kadari Exson, Denzel McGriggs; Back row: Isaac Pole, John Sawyer, Jacob Toodle, David Gaines, Jeremiah Marshall, Brandon Streck, Thomas Adam, Tyjonn Lockett, Braedan Stubbs, Markeonti Teamer, Brandon Polk.

Boys' Cross Country
Coach: Michael Hoffman
Front row: Michael Sparks, Andrew Merced, Alec Edwards, Miguel Tapia; Second row: Hayden Harmon, Justin Bhe, Dondre Minnion, Brandon Hurson, Christian Bracey; Back row: Assistant Coach Patrick Coffey, Nicholas Owens, Nicholas Doneski, Michael Johnson II, Coach Hoffman.

Girls' Cross Country
Coach: Michael Hoffman
Front row: Camille Ochoa, Diamond Taher, Candace Howard, Crystal Cabrera, Brendea McNeal; Second row: Asianna Peterson, Eryn Jenkins, Prysma Valdivia, Moniel Sanders, Abigail Martinez, Marisol Ramirez; Back row: Assistant Coach Patrick Coffey, Le'Anna Scott, Megan Dziewicki, Kayleigh Champion, Coach Hoffman.

Varsity Volleyball
Coach: Veronica Siwy
Front row: Emily Glover, Ashli McNair, Kennedy Nunn; Second row: Morgan Harris, Maya Griffin, Makayla Pearson, Janae' West; Back row: Assistant Coach Christina Brown, Jordan McDonald, Angel Munchenburg, Ashley Ojo, Coach Siwy.

Junior Varsity Volleyball
Coach: Joan Gordon
Front row: Jaylynn Hardrick, Alexandra Chambliss, Ireon Smith, Aubren Rosas, Casey Harvey; Second row: Emily Lesich, Shelby Harmon, Alexis Ramos, Emily Glover; Back row: Coach Gordon, Torian Bryant, Lauren Pryle, Mekhayla Gibson, Charysse James.

Girls' Golf
Coach: Patti Tubbs
Front row: Kayla Grant, Jessica Cole, Brianna Cole, Kathryn Jurczyk; Back row: Ashley Washington, Hunter Kaiser, Maryam Ali, Kelci Coker, Coach Tubbs.

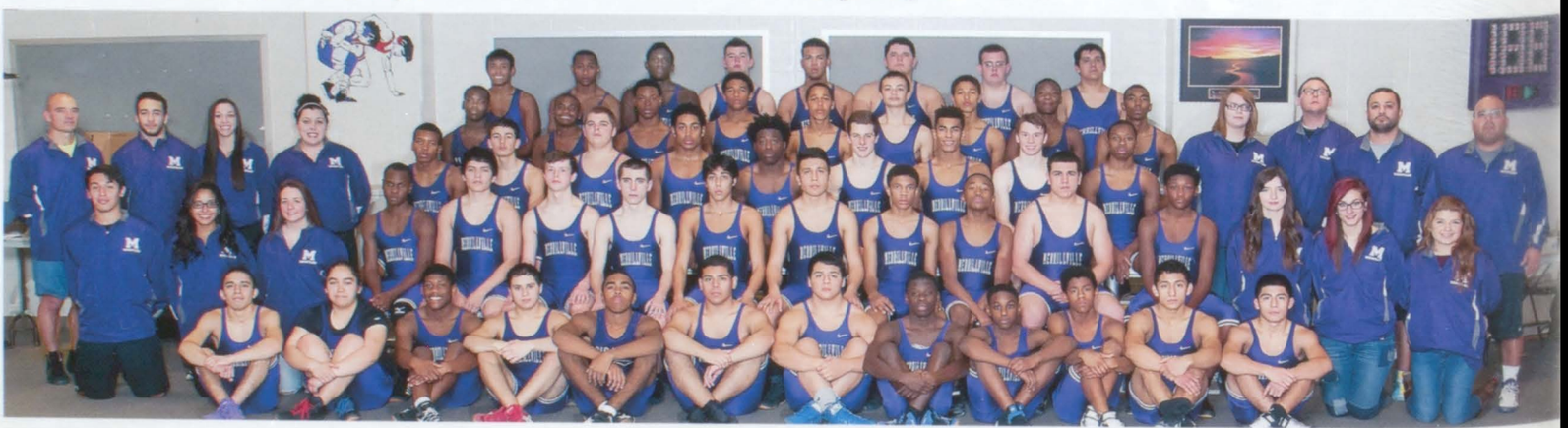
Boys' Tennis
Coach: James Simon
Front row: Joseph Harris III, Leon Kallert, Deion Charleston, Matthew Spicknall, Keith Rochefort, Ferdinand Aton; Second row: Jason Bell, D'Angelo Brown, Derel Shell, Montriel Shell, Marcus Miller; Back row: Nana Asabere, Terry Sabbath, Gerald Akujobi Jr., Ayron Williams, Alonzo Brown, Steffan Santiago, Justin Hinton.

Varsity Boys' Basketball
Coach: T.J. Lux
Front row: Manager Michael Pearson Jr., James Walters III, Marcel Cherry, Sharrod Mitchell, Manager Taj Taylor, Manager Justin Smith; Second row: Charles Jacobs III, Demond Wilkins Jr., Jonah Jackson, Mitchell Ward Jr., Zion Young; Third row: Vejer Cox, Cameron Wilbon, Jairus Stevens, Ramone Atkins Frazier; Back row: Coach Brian Fogarty, Coach Bo Patton, Coach Lux.

Junior Varsity Boys' Basketball
Coach: Bo Patton
Front row: James Kirklen Jr., Daniel Taylor, Jalen Sherwood, Manager Nickoleus Riley; Second row: Kameron Jackson, Alfred Stubbs III, Daniel Carey, Mileek McMillan, Corey Crawford Jr.; Back row: Coach Patton.

Girls' Swimming and Diving
Coach: Ladd Downham
Front row: DeJah Jones, Marisol Ramirez, Angela Terry, Ebonie Ali, Carly Gubitz; Second row: Laquiana Jones, Viviana Lagunas, Bea Tamo; Third row: Coach Jeremy Boyer, Coach Downham, Coach Sara Stallings, Robin Townsend, Tzu Ting Tseng, Breonna Baggett, Karina Robledo; Back row: Melissa Brayfield, Jhonae Garmon, Liane-Samone Chambers, Prysma Valdivia, Morgan Harris, Fabienne Laurisch, Hannah Sawyer.

Boys' Swimming and Diving
Coach: Ladd Downham
Front row: Alton Desadier III, Jayson Jones, Tavion Wheeler, Brian Baran, Wesley Babilonia, Edmon Gunn Jr., Diontae Phillips; Second row: Josh Hiller, Anthony Hardin, Maliq Cherry, Kendall Tanniehill, Justin Jerry; Third row: Tevon Cooper, Michael Mahone, Dwayne Fitzpatrick Jr., Tyler Jasso, Gregory Vega Jr., Joseph Harris II, Alexis Lopez, Carlton Jones; Back row: Coach Jeremy Boyer, Coach Sara Stallings, Coach Downham, Bea Tamo, Viviana Lagunas, Laquiana Jones.



Wrestling
Coach: David Maldonado
Front row: Felipe Godinez, Eufracia Taisipic, Robert Adams, David Rosa, Ah'zsur Ursery, Andrew Merced, Raymond Duque Jr., Donovan Carpenter, Anthony Lee, Alec Edwards, Moises Diaz, Michael De La Peña; Second row: Coach Al Padilla, Viridiana Carrillo, Kali Stevens, Tylum Moncreace, Miguel Martinez, Kyle McCallister, Nathan Potter, Miguel Tapia, Mario Preciado, Xavier Griffin, Aaron Griggs, Luis Estrada, George McClendon III, Emily DeCausemaker, Skye Martin, Meagan Clarkson; Third row: Coach Robert Heckler, Coach Michael Spudic Jr., Emily Lesich, Andria Woodworth, TyRaye Austin, Joseph Aponte, Tyler Anderson, Thomas Butler Jr., Kamau Richardson, Jacob Covaciu, Clarence Johnson III, Derek Scott, Justin Johnson, Kaitlyn Doneski, Coach Robert Petyko, Coach Paul Maldonado, Coach David Maldonado; Fourth row: Dennis Weston, Brett Norton, Zaire Moss, Antonio Balducci, Malik Hoover, Alexander Navarro, Romeo Hoover, Tyjonn Lockett, Elijah Coy; Back row: Willie Woods IV, Anthony Turner, Nathan Martin-Ellison, Brandon Streck, Jairus-Michael Perry, Shawn Streck, Andrew Vander Woude, Orlando Lopez.

Varsity Girls' Basketball
Coach: Amy Govert
Front row: Carissa Lewis, Alexus Shirrells, Miracle Akins, Jasmine Wright, Nia Hurt, Diamond Harvey; Second row: Montriel Shell, Kiarra Thompson, Makayla Pearson, Jaz Talley, Erika McClinton, Garrett Ferrell; Back row: Lauren Stanley, Kristin McGee, Victoria Gaines, Ashiala Jackson, Coach Kelly Kratz, Coach Govert.

Gymnastics
Coach: Diane Roberts
Front Row: Heather Osorio, Ke'leica Junigan, Jazmyne Magee, Jannel Boyd, Sabrina Sanchez; Second Row: Ashlee Fields, Bethany Rochefort, Destiny Washington, Amara Hester, Hunter Kaiser, Crystn Morgan, Mikayla Harmon; Back Row: Coach Nick Roberts, Xayvion Gantt, Coach Valerie Bly, Jeremy Herrod, Coach Roberts.

Varsity Baseball
Coach: Mark Schellinger
Front row: Meagan Clarkson, Thomas Butler Jr., Thomas Jones, Terrance Grayson, William Ballard, James Sutherland III, Nathan Potter; Second row: Coach Brian Parker, Coach Shellinger, Omar Ramirez, Jonathan Sutherland, Thomas Smith, Ryan Brady, Chad Deline, Coach John Kwiatkoski, Coach Conner Buxton; Back row: Vejer Cox, Brendon Bistrican, Brayden Boatwright, Darius Kendall, Matthew Meux, Jonathan Streck.

Junior Varsity Girls' Basketball
Coach: Britney Cruse
Front row: Akelah Gonzalez, Nia Hurt, Kennedy Tanniehill, Desia Dean, Carissa Lewis; Second row: Denae Joshua, Brittney Williams, Makayla Pearson, Precious Carter; Back row: Coach Cruse, Staje Vanzant-Hadley, Shelby Harmon, Alexis Ramos, Raegene Thomas, Coach Christina Brown.

Boys' Golf
Coach: Patti Tubbs
Front row: Kendall Johnson, Jaylin Scott, Elijah Royal, Keelan Outlar, Eugene Boyd, Jose Fragoso; Second row: Coach Tubbs, Michael Robinson, Jelani Gibson, Wesley Babilonia, Justin Griffin, Marcus Norton, Keith Rochefort Jr., Victor-Jacolbi Boyd, Coach Benjamin Daniel.

Junior Varsity Baseball
Coaches: Bill Roberts, Darryl Evans, Tyler Scheive
Front row: Ramon Garcia-Valle, Maxwell Govert, Aton Ferdinand, Reginald Carter, Carlos Perez; Second row: Tyler Nelson, Ayron Williams, Ryan Smith, Martell Stitt, DaiQuan Ford, Roberto Carbajal; Back row: John Sawyer, Darryn Daniels, Melvin Magee, Michael Pearson Jr., Matthew Mallon, Thomas Hansbury III.

Boys' Track
Coach: Patrick Coffey
Front row: Derrick Frazier Jr., Jordan Downs, Joshua Morando, Dondre Minnion, Miguel Tapia, Justin Bhe; Second row: Henry Holzwarth, Reese Gibson, Michael Sparks Jr., Garrett Ferrell, Brandon Hurson, Michael Johnson II, Hayden Harmon; Third row: Jonathan Robinson, Anthony Brown, Desmond Thomas, Moses Johnson, Brett Norton; Fourth Row: Chaz Sales, Nicholas Owens, Kenyatta Smith, Isaiah Davis, Loron Steele, Jay'lon Gordon, Tylum Moncreace; Fifth row: JoRale Wheeler, Adam Serros, Sean Roche', Khari Smith, Jordan Young, Anthony Sams Jr., Alphonso Blackwell III, Zyriek Nickson; Sixth row: Coach Luis Lopez, Payton Ash, Jordan Baldwin, Brian Sales, Darwind Chism, Montrell Harris-Jackson, Coach Anthony Curry; Back row: Coach Gary Lindsey, Matthew Thompson, Isaiah Thornton, Tyjonn Lockett, Joseph Aponte, Day'Shoun Robinson, Darryl Robinson, Coach Coffey.

Girls' Track
Coach: Kelly Kratz
Front row: Jazmyne Magee, Brendea McNeal, Christian Gridiron, Ebony Harris, Joycelynn West, Diamond Taher, Marisol Ramirez, Eryn Jenkins; Second row: Kiara Key, Brianna Brown, Camille Ochoa, Crystal Cabrera, Jaime Scott, Aeriel Shelton, Jasmine Beamon, Nia Hurt; Third row: Prysma Valdivia, Carnisa Laster, Malika Sweeney, Destiny Washington, Sydney Tucker, Emily Lesich, Maya Griffin, Natalie Dye, Gabrielle Stewart, Cryst'n Morgan; Back row: Coach Christopher Richardson, Coach Kratz, Staje Vanzant-Hadley, Raege'ne Thomas, Alivia Ash, Jordan Stanley, Jordan McDonald, Nicole Webster, Jaz Talley, Coach Tierra Simpson, Coach Mike Hoffman.

Varsity Softball
Coach: Kristina Sides
Front row: Emily Glover, Isis Nash, Ireon Smith, Jasmine Sanders, Jennifer Villanueva, Coach Amber Welsh; Back row: Coach Bill Kornacki, Tommye Nelson, Alexis Ramos, McKinzie Dalton, Makayla Pearson, Chloe Nelson, Kristin McGee, Coach Sides.

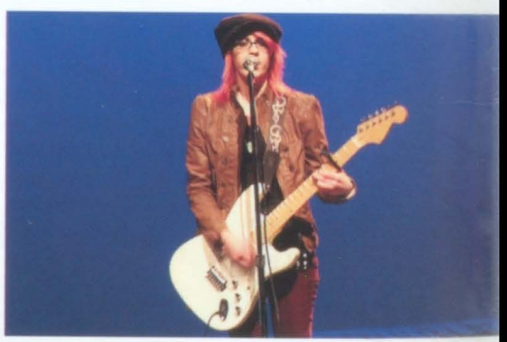
Junior Varsity Softball
Coaches: Adam Fricke and Thomas Niksich
Front row: Mi-Chae' Smith, Miracle Akins, Marissa Ramos, Viridiana Carrillo, Renee Bozeman; Back row: Coach Fricke, Brittney Williams, Alanna Bankhead, Shelby Harmon, Tammiah Ingram, Breanne Downing, Coach Niksich.

Girls' Tennis
Coach: Stoten Stofko
Front row: Ashlyn Robinson, Mariah Jimenez, Victoria Terry, Jazlyn Martinez, Sara Ramirez, Lacey Davis; Second row: India Bradley, Illaha Abdul, Kamri Smith, Alice Canchola, Claribell Quinones, Katelyn Vinson; Third row: Coach Colin Burke, Aliyah Robinson, Madison Bullock, Rahma Safraoui, Cynthia Basu-Chavez, Mariana Cantu, Coach Stofko; Back row: Tzu Ting Tseng, Amber Dawning, Erika McClinton, Janae Williams, Allyssa Mihal, Christian Luckett.

Juniors Rebecca Knight and Erika McClinton and Senior Jaz Talley

Science Teacher Mrs. Patricia Robison

Junior Adrian Brooks and Senior Justin Patton



Senior Wynonna Wagonblast

People Place

Looking forward to teaching

Sophomore Carlos Perez

Mr. Dan Schoon and Freshman Elliott Ruffin Jr.

Ms. Shelby Brabbs and Freshman Tyler Brown

The career journey for Ms. Shelby Brabbs started out with a major in nursing, but she switched to a teaching career and hasn't looked back since.

"I like Merrillville a lot, and at this time there is nowhere I would rather be," Ms. Brabbs said. Education classes at Purdue Calumet trained her for the classroom. But she has learned more just by being here.

"Being here has taught me how to combine schooling with interacting with students," Ms. Brabbs said.

She became a student teacher under the wings of history teacher Mr. Michael Knocke at the beginning of the 2014-15 school year.

"I have a tremendous amount of respect for the amount of empathy that Ms. Brabbs has for her students," Mr. Knocke said. "She has tried to make all students feel comfortable in the classroom and has created a positive learning environment every single day."

Ms. Brabbs said she believes she has a good connection with her students, something that she really strives for.

"Since we are similar in age, I get the things that people are saying, the trends that kids are in to, and I try to use that whenever possible," Ms. Brabbs said.

Sophomore Elijah Royal said that he thinks her teaching style is unique. She makes him feel comfortable in her classroom.

"She creates a comfortable environment for us," Royal said. "And chooses bell ringers that she encourages us to have classroom discussions about."

Daniela Acevedo
Adalberto Acosta
Cora` Taya Adams
Nolen Adams
Robert Adams
Thomas Adams Jr.

Seth Akers
Badea Ali
Matthew Alleyne
Jaime Alvarez II
Dionna Anderson
Jamal Anderson

Josiah Anderson
Tyler Anderson
Khamari Andrews
Joseph Aponte
Marcus Ashe
Ryan Atkins Fraizer

Ferdinand Aton
Kevin Attah
Teaja Ayres
Avien Balbosa
Taylor Ballard
Daniel Barajas

Keith Barnard
Antino Barnes Jr.
Skye Baso
Jordyn Bates
Salvador Bautista
Jasmine Beamon

Jasmine Bell
Max Benkert
Robyn Berry
Paul Berry Jr.
Dominic Bethel
Justin Bhe

Cara Blanford
Airron Blissett
Jerek Boclair
Jamael Boone
Paul Bowens III
De`Sjuan Bowling

Christopher Bowman
Rah`Naysha Boyd
Eugene Boyd Jr.
Christian Bracey
Noah Bradley
Christopher Brock

Airashaie Brooks
Antonio Brooks
Emaree Broussard
D`Angelo Brown
Dajamori` Brown
Justin Brown

Officers for the Class of 2018
Front row: Secretary Jada Edwards;
Back row: Vice President Khayla Harris,
President Akelah Gonzalez.

Officers hoping to involve classmates in more activities

Not wanting to just be regular kids and bystanders throughout their high school experiences, Freshmen Akelah Gonzalez and Khayla Harris decided to run for class office.

As members of the Class of 2018, they wanted to make the year memorable.

Gonzalez said her main goals are to involve more freshmen in class activities and to ensure they are academically successful.

"I want everyone to be involved because nobody in my class wants to be involved in school activities," Gonzalez said.

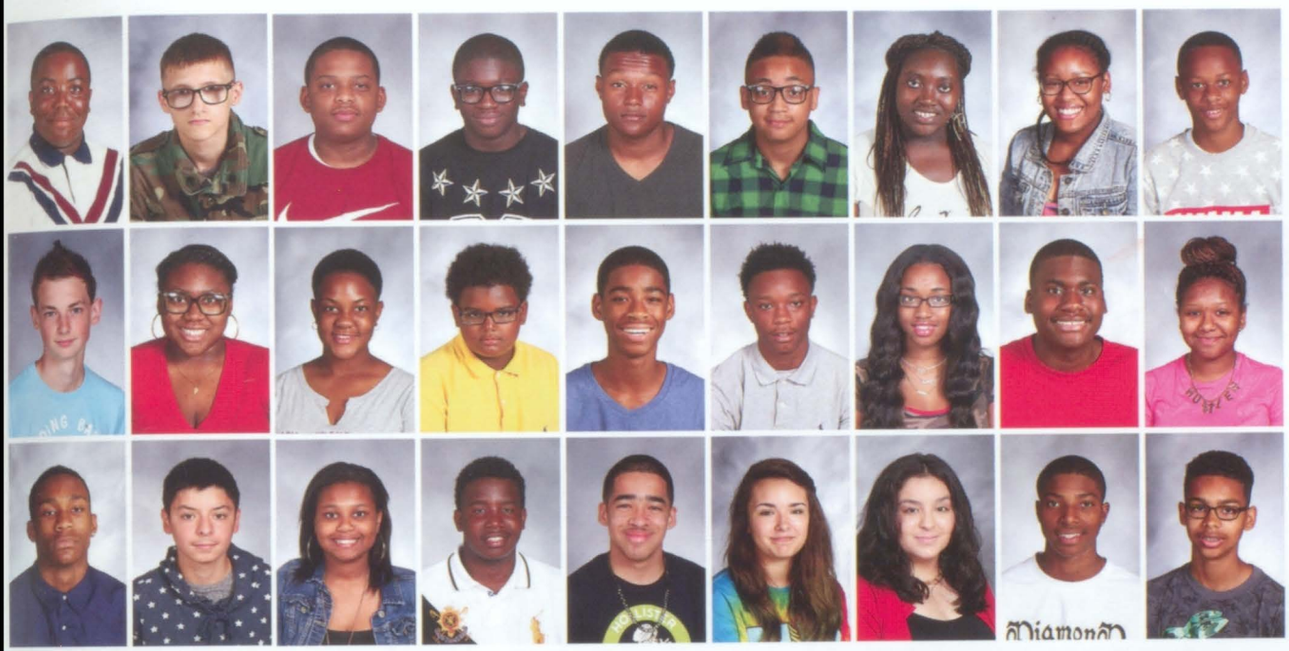
Vice President Harris said she aims to help her classmates become more respectful and mature so they can prepare for the lives ahead of them.

"These goals will be met by me telling the kids to do the right thing," Harris said.

Both the president and vice president said they thought being class officers would be fun. As officers, they would have an opportunity to interact with their peers in a unique way.

Gonzalez said she thinks serving as a class officer will benefit her in the future.

"Knowing that I'm president, it will look really good on my transcript and tell I am a good leader," Gonzalez said.



Keylian Brown
Ronald Brown
Trevon Brown
Tyler Brown
Ervin Bryan II
Tinotchy Bryant
Airika Buckley
Madison Bullock
Neddie Burks III
Dylan Burns
Deanna Burton
Coretta Bush
Wayan Caldwell
Jaizon Calvert
Michael Cameron
Cayla Campbell
Courtney Campbell
Adrianna Carey
Daniel Carey
Juan Carrillo
Kiariah Carter
Kevin Carter Jr.
Reginald Carter III
Danielle Castaneda
Lianna Celestin
Ronald Chandler Jr.
Armonn Chavez

Class of 2018

Dana Cheairs
Maliq Cherry
Nakia Chinn
Daveontay Clark
Robert Clark
William Clay Jr.
Tamara Clements
Jaydah Cobb
Kennedy Cole
Angel Collins
Desmond Collins
Jasmine Collins
Emmalee Colwell
Damian Comanse
Rosario Contreras
DaVeon Coty
Chante Coulter
Qua`Lyn Cowart
Savannah Cox
Deameka Crawford
Terrance Cross Jr.
Azjanae Cruz
Dulce Cuazitl
Elizabeth Cuazitl
D`Amani Cundiff
Miranda Cuozzo
Raeanne Davila

Amber Davis
Kinnedi Davis
Lacey Davis
Brandon Dawning
Briana Dean
Dasia Dean

Diana Del Real
Gregory Denisiuk
Monique Denton
Alicia Derr
Abigail Diaz
Cassandra Dildine

Ranea Dixon
Kaitlyn Doneski
Keana Dorris
Julia Ducret
Natalya Durham
Natalie Dye

Nathan Dye
Romel Echarry II
Alec Edwards
Jada Edwards
Yantre Edwards
Davion Ervin-Poindextr

Felicia Estrada
Luis Estrada
Raven Ewing
Kadari Exson
Ayanna Felton
Bryan Fields

Cameron Figueroa
Wade Flournoy
Kameron Flowers
Heather Fox
Kylie Fox
Jose Fragoso

Maritza Frazier
Adrian Frazier Jr.
Czaria Freeman
Cole Frey
Tervoris Fuller
David Gaines Jr.

Aliyah Galliday
Jaylin Gamble
Jessica Gamble
Justin Gamble
Tamil Gamble
Ramon Garcia-Valle

Jhonae Garmon
Cameron Garner
Dalajamane Garza
Jarcques Gaston
Xavier Gibson
Kayln Gill

In the Wednesday Bible Club meeting, Freshman Alexander Navarro leads the group in the final prayer. Alexander and his older sister, Senior Angelica Navarro, are active members in the club.

Faith, older sister help Navarro adjust to high school

Freshman Alexander Navarro knew his sister would help him out when he entered high school.

Alexander is the younger brother of an actively-involved senior whom he said is "definitely smarter than me."

Alexander said he looked to Senior Angelica Navarro for help with academics and advice on how to succeed in high school.

"Whenever I had homework or a project, she helped me at night," he said.

She helped in other ways, too.

"When people think of Angelica, they think good of me because she is my sister," Alexander said.

Angelica said she wanted to be a positive role model for Alexander.

"I try to influence him to do the right thing," Angelica said.

Still, Alexander wanted to make his own way.

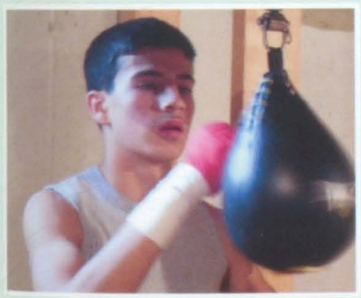
Angelica is active in Socially Together and Naturally Diverse and the Spanish Club. She is a freshmen mentor who played two sports, and she participates in Bible Club activities each week.

"I decided to play soccer," Alexander said. "I tried a couple of different sports and decided to stick with soccer."

The brother and sister do share an interest in the Bible Club, which stems from years of attending Jubilee Worship Center in Hobart.

"We grew up going there Wednesdays and Sundays," Alexander said. "My faith makes me strong. I never give up, even when I'm down."

Ta-Tiana Gillis
Dawan Glenn Jr.
Christian Glover
Mia Godfrey
Akelah Gonzalez
Nicholas Goodwin
Israell Gordon
Maxwell Govert
John Grace Jr.
Asia Gray
Ariel Green
James Green
Treasure Green
Kami Greer
Medina Griffin
Xavier Griffin
Robert Griffin Jr.
Aaron Griggs
Aaron Groce
Nicholas Groleau
Victoria Gromek
Carly Gubitz
Edmund Gunn Jr.
Monique Guydon
David Hagan Jr.
Akeem Hall
Destiny Hall



Punching a speed bag, Freshman Joseph Aponte works to improve his hits. "I like the speed bag because it's helped me get to the speed where I need to be," Aponte said. He also uses a double bag and a heavy bag to improve his technique.

Aponte uses punching bag to ease stress

Not until he entered high school did Freshman Joseph Aponte realize he could use boxing as a stress reliever.

Aponte started boxing at the age of eight with the help of his dad and close friend Senior Andy Murga.

With his father's coaching, Aponte was ready to fight at the age of ten.

"My dad is my inspiration," Aponte said. "He taught me how to box when I was little and still teaches me new things today."

The summer before eighth grade, Murga began training Aponte.

"Joey wasn't hard to train at all. He had good movement, which was an advantage," Murga said.

Although Aponte does not box competitively, he still boxes with his friends and family in the basement of his house and will sometimes go to One In A Million gym.

"I knocked out one of my friends on accident," Aponte said. "We were boxing in my basement and I hit him with a hook, and I knocked him out."

Tajae Hannon
Tori Hardin
Nautica Hardy
Hayden Harmon
Shelby Harmon
Marquise Harper
Jamia Harris
Khayla Harris
Marlon Harris
Tierra Harris
Jaden Harrison
Tia Harrison
Danielle Hathaway
Antoine Hawkins
Marcus Hayes
Leandrea Heath
Joshua Henderson
Austin Hendricks
Cardalina Hernandez
Destiny Hernandez
Leslie Hernandez
Marcos Hernandez Meija
Heather Herrera
Amara Hester
Timeah Hicks
Taelor Hill
Caleb Hiller

Triston Hillman
Justin Hinton
Dominique Holden
Nicole Hollowell
Tori Holst
Khristen Holt

Malik Hoover
Shyann Hopson
Princeston Horton
Trenton Housler
TaiYauna Howard
Kayla Hudson

Timothy Hughes
Alyssa Hunt
Adrianna Hurd
Trenton Hutch
James Ireland III
Cecilia Irizarry

Jaylin Jackson
MyjaBreAnn Jackson
Sha`Lynn James
Jasmine Jaramillo
Tyler Jasso
Elijah Jefferson

Bryson Jenkins
Cayla Jenkins
Elyssa Jenkins
Juwan Jenkins
Carlos Jimenez
Deamonte Johnson

Isa Johnson
Jacqueline Johnson
Jada Johnson
Kaylah Johnson
Kendall Johnson
Tyreik Johnson

Antoine Johnson Jr.
Jovan Johnson Jr.
Kentrell Jolley
Alexis Jones
Brianna Jones
Kaylin Jones

Kiarra Jones
Laquiana Jones
Lyric Jones
Tiarra Jones
Westley Jordan
Patrick Joseph

Denae Joshua
Kayla Josleyn
Sarah Juarez
Ke`leica Junigan
O`Sean Kelly-Williams
Sydney Kenner

Gunn confident he can be competitive in DAC

"You can't put a limit on anything. The more you dream, the farther you get."
Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps

Freshman Edmund Gunn Jr. agrees with the Olympic swimmer who won 22 medals.

His dream is to become a competitive swimmer in the Duneland Athletic Conference, and he says he is willing to work hard to achieve his dream.

Gunn has been swimming for about eight years. He said growing up he always saw his sisters swimming and he thought he could do the same or perhaps be even better than his sisters.

He also participates in band and volunteers with his church youth group, The Christian Team Ministry of the Saint Timothy Community Church.

"I have chosen swimming over all my other sports because it's more comfortable working out in the water than on land for me," Gunn said.

Mastering swimming skills, such as using better breathing techniques, learning new strokes and pushing himself even when he's tired are his biggest challenges.

"When people are in front of me in the lane, that pushes me to be better," he said, "and I keep telling myself to move faster and not get tired."

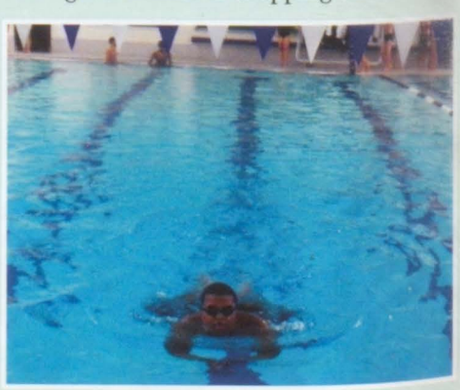
Gunn swam his quickest time for the 50-yard breast stroke in 40 seconds.

Team members share Gunn's confidence that he can be a competitive threat in the DAC and beyond.

"He's an excellent swimmer, and if he keeps trying, he can make varsity," Freshman Tyler Jasso said.

One of his hopes for this year is to achieve a spot on the varsity swim team.

"If he stays focused and keeps working hard," Head Coach Ladd Downham said, "he's got a chance at dropping times."

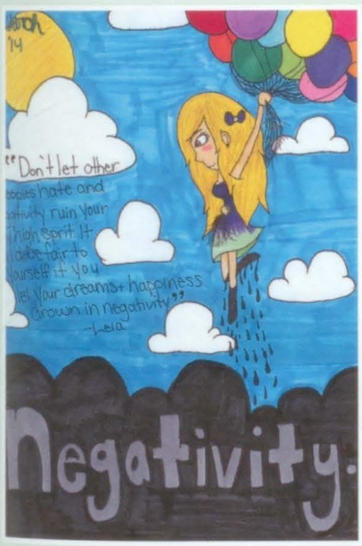


During a pre-season practice, Freshman Edmund Gunn Jr. swims the breast stroke to get himself ready for the winter swim season.

Justin Kiel
Deawnna Kimble
Aaliyah King
Blake King
Dwayne King
Kevon King
Autumn Kiser
Asha Kizer
Angelica Knox

Terrell Kopca
Kristen Kuykendoll
Viviana Lagunas
Cameron Lamb
Brad Lawrence II
Devian Leal
Danielle LeGrand
Shekinah Lenoir
Emily Lesich

Emma Lewandowski
Brittanie Lewis
Christian Licea
KeShawn Lilly
Tyjonn Lockett
Michael Lomec Jr.
Jovana Long
Najla Louis
Malik Love



Environment inspires freshman artist to pursue art

Freshman Leia Mesarch finds her passion in drawing.

She picked up her pencils when she was five, and she hasn't put them down since.

"My environment around me inspires me," Mesarch said. "When I'm in a bad mood, it inspires me to draw more."

Mesarch entitled the accompanying drawing "Negativity."

Drawings often have a certain distinct quality about them that make them stand out from others.

"I think all drawings are unique. I like to use really bright palettes when drawing, and even if the drawing is dark and depressing, I make it look more exciting," Mesarch said.

Mesarch said she plans to continue her art career as she gets older.

"I plan on going to an art college," Mesarch said. "I would like to have a career in animation or graphic design."

Tajhere Lowery
Alexis Lumpkin
Gabriel Macapagal
Damaryon Mack
Tanecia Maclin
Javon Madkins
Melvin Magee
Eloy Maldonado
Raheim Manuel

Jeremiah Marshall
Camdoen Martin
Samantha Martinez
Jasmine Martinez-Santa
Tiffany Mason
Ramiyah Mayo
Mik`el Mays
Michael McCeader
George McClendon III

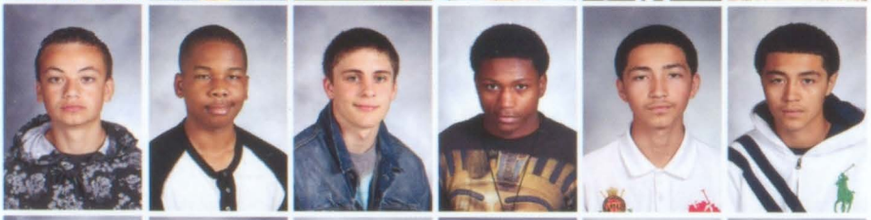
Tanea McEwen
Juanita McGee
Ryan McGee
Teresa McGee
Denzel McGriggs
Asia McLean
Ti`mair McMullan
Brendea McNeal
Cristian Mendoza

Leia Mesarch
Linyhia Meux-Miller
Zion Middlebrooks
Damione Miller
Kayla Miller
Tanazah Miller

Riste Mindev
Dijon Minnis
Tylum Moncreace
Kierra Moore
Christian Moorer
Crystn Morgan

Diamond Morris
Carrington Morse
Zaire Moss
Vasotti Mottley
Wali Muhammad
Molly Murphy

Alexander Navarro
Henry Nelson
Tyler Nelson
Ezekiel Nettles
Daniel Nevarez
Demetrio Nevarez



Milanka Newell
Zyriek Nickson
Mariah Nobles
Kyle Noonan
Brett Norton
Michail Nunn

Sachae Nunn
Syrrus Nunn
Joy Obong
Keelan Outlar
De'leon Palmer
Darrion Parker

Jorge Parra
Malik Passmore
Vinson Patterson
Sidney Patton
Sierra Patton
Cameron Payne Jr.

Angela Pejovski
Samantha Perea
Isaiah Perez
George Perosky
Tatiana Peters
Andrew Platts

Isaac Pole
Brandon Polk
Dontrell Pope
Ashley Porter
Khalil Porter
Timothy Porter IV

Best friends do everything together

In 5th grade, Freshman Katelyn Vinson couldn't open her locker, so Freshman Sarah Thormann came to her rescue. The two girls, who didn't know each other then, have become inseparable.

"She opened my locker up for me almost every day, and we've been friends since then," Vinson said.

Neither of the girls dominates the other, Thormann said. They just alternate who's in charge. But both agree that Vinson is a little bit more opinionated.

"It's kind of like I will do whatever she wants to do, and she'll do whatever I want to do," Vinson said.

To maintain their close friendship, they do what typical friends do. They watch movies together. They go to bonfires together. They walk and talk together every day.

Both are involved in Environmental Club. Vinson is the marketing director, whose job is to promote the club, whether it's on PNN or just making posters.

Thormann said she joins whatever project Vinson is participating in and described herself as "just a working bee." Since the girls have been friends for about four years, they have some interesting stories to tell about their friendship.

"We watched a scary movie about a serial killer that put the people he killed inside a trash bag," Vinson said. "And we were outside walking just after we got finished watching the movie, we saw a trash bag outside and she went up to it. So I screamed at her, 'No, don't open that. He might get you.'"

The girls agreed that their friendship is based on the fact that they simply like being with each other. And like many good friends, they like to do everything together.

"In the classes that we have together," Thormann said, "we make sure that we are in the same group."

Best friends Freshmen Katelyn Vinson and Sarah Thormann begin the day together in Mrs. Patti Robison's Honors Biology class. The two have been best friends since 5th grade. "They are inseparable," Mrs. Robison said.

Monica Prince
Tori Pruitt
Lauren Pryle
Stephanie Puente
Edward Quintero
Alicia Ramirez
Marisol Ramirez
Alexis Ramos
Damari Ramos
Eric Ramos
Marissa Ramos
La'Deja Rand
Denzel Randolph
Tanis Randolph
Dezirae Ratliff
Kwante` Ray
Brandynn Reed
Kailynn Reed
Krystal Reed
Simeon Reed
Elijah Reid
Raquel Reyes
Nihayla Rias
Cassandra Rich
Azaria Richardson
Adrianna Rietman
Elaycia Riley

Gamble triplets say they are more different than similar

Triplets Justin, Jaylin and Jessica Gamble are just like any other siblings.

They share similarities that bring them together. Differences set them apart.

"We all like the same color, which is blue," Justin said.

The similarity stops there.

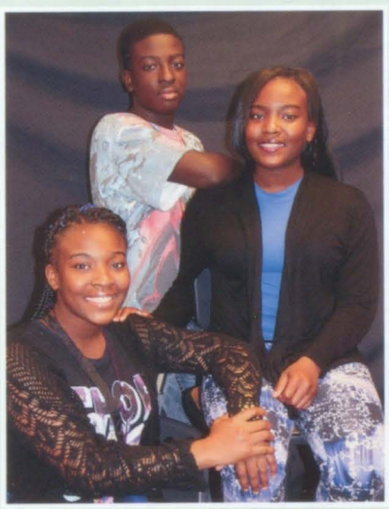
"Me and Jaylin are very outgoing people, but Justin is quiet. Also, I am kind of a tomboy and I dress more athletic, and Jaylin dresses more girly," Jessica said.

The Gambles are mixed triplets. Jaylin and Jessica are identical. Justin is their fraternal brother.

People often believe that triplets feel each other's pain or have telepathy when something bad is happening to the other triplet.

"This one time, Jessica was about to fight somebody, and I had these 'twin senses' that told me she was in trouble," Jaylin said.

"One time, somebody hit my sister," Justin said, "and my other sister was across the hall and screamed, 'Ouch.'"



In the setting of a family portrait, Freshmen triplets Jessica, Justin and Jaylin Gamble pose for the camera. "Jessica and Jaylin like to dance, but we all like to go go-karting," Jaylin said. "We all like to eat together, though, and bond as a family." The triplets also have another set of triplets on their dad's side and the triplets include a set of all girls.

Amari Ritchie
Ashlyn Robinson
Darryl Robinson
Marshawn Robinson
Keith Rochefort Jr.
Zaria Rock
Nya Rodgers
Allison Rodriguez
Gregory Romeo
Leonardo Romero
Jonah Rosas
Elliott Ruffin Jr.
Tyler Russell
Lori Saenz
Chaz Sales
Andrew Salka
Cameron Sanders
Collin Sanders
Dana Sanders
Robert Sanders Jr.
Jacob Sandridge
Christopher Saporito
John Sawyer
Taylynne Schwartzkopf
Brandon Scott
Jaime Scott
Le`Anna Scott

Kyle Semmes
Erica Serros
Justin Setzer
Michael Shell III
Aeriel Shelton
Antineal Shelton

Preston Shirley
Savannah Shirley
Joseph Silvas
Erin Sims
Jonathan Sims
Amariah Smith

Christian Smith
D`Mia Smith
Kamri Smith
Ryan Smith
William Smith
Tay`zha Span

Matthew Spicknall
Daniel Sprouse Jr.
Kyra Stevens
Joseph Stevenson
Aaliyah Stewart
Kaitlin Stingley

Tamia Stingley
Sincere Stitt
Joshua Strain
Brandon Streck
Angelo Strong
Braedan Stubbs

Phat Ta
Diamond Taher
Chadryne Tamo
Jansen Tan
Kendall Tanniehill
Kennedy Tanniehill

Ivelisse Taylor
Olivia Taylor
Brandon Taylor II
Markeonti Teamer
Meagan Thomas
Tyler Thomas

Maurice Thomas III
Cameron Thompson
Lakya Thompson
Sabrina Thormann
Sarah Thormann
Mariah Thornton

Heaven Tomlinson
Jacob Toodle
Jubilee Topps
Angelo Torres
Tamara Trimble
Kayla Trotter

The morning after the fall concert, Freshman Justin Hinton practices his cello. "I never rest," Hinton said. "I practice my cello whenever I get the chance."

Freshman Hinton not ready to live in brother's shadow

As the youngest of the family, Freshman Justin Hinton did not always have it easy.

Even though he looks up to his older brother, Junior David Hinton II, the younger brother said he struggles because he does not want to live in his shadow.

Their orchestra teacher recognizes talents in both.

"They're both talented," Orchestra Director Mr. Jeffery Lang said. "Justin works hard and wants to get better."

Justin said he turned what many might consider a nuisance into an opportunity using his brother David for inspiration.

"But there's a little bit of rivalry," Justin said. "He's perfect and I'm not. I say that out of compassion."

David's accomplishments pushed Justin to do better both in school and in orchestra, where he plays the cello. Justin wanted to be similar to his older brother.

"It dedicates me," Justin said. "It pushes me to be as good or better than him."

Camera shy

Alanna Bankhead
Taya Bauske
William Brumfield
Mercedes Bryant
Michael Carrington
Peter Castaneda
De Clemmons
Johnnie Clemons
Sharon Cooper
Louis DiMucci
Fatimah Dixon
Kamryn Ford
Jorge Gaona
Jasmine Garcia-Salazar
Neiman Grier
Jah'Moni Hamlet
Starr Harris
William Houldieson
Jaylin Houghes
Eric Jethroe
Nicolas McGee
Jeremy McGee
Goose McKenzie
Anthony Minor
Ibra Ndiour
Johnny Nogerelli
Bri'Yanna Pearson
Cecilia Pedroza
Paul Pitts
Cynthia Quiroz
Paulette Rebchuck
Dolores Rebchuck
Enrique Rivera
Sylvia Rodriguez
Kristyn Rogers
Montana Schulatz
Sierre Smith
Reannah Soto
Dieontae Sparks
Laron Steele
David Vazquez
Brian Ward
Akilah Ware
Isreal Woods
Stephanie Zinone

Treneal Tyes
Ah`zsur Ursery
Faye Valadez
Prysma Valdivia
Antonio Valentin
Vance VanCuren
Brianna Vanderbilt
Tyler VanVleet
Staje Vanzant-Hadley

Aaron Vara
Dawon Velez
Katelyn Vinson
Xitlali Viramontes Renateria
Selena Wagonblast
Brian Walker
Nicholas Walker
Erica Walton
Destiny Washington

Keeshawn Weaver
TraVon Weaver
Joycelynn West
Darieus Westbrook
Dennis Weston
Tavion Wheeler
Aaron Whitaker
Alyssa White
Genesis White

With music in her family, Godfree plans a career of singing, dancing, acting

Freshman Mia Godfree wants to turn her talent for singing, dancing and acting into a full-time career.

"When I get older, I just see myself performing on stage," Godfree said. "I just can't see myself doing anything but that."

Godfree said she has been singing since she could remember, but she did not get involved in theatre until this year.

She scored the part of Hippolyta in the fall play, "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Godfree said her love of music runs in her family.

"My family is a music family," Godfree said, "so I want to continue down that path."

Godfree said she plans to have a career in performing arts and would love to attend Columbia College in Chicago.

"I joined theatre because I always love the idea of performing on stage," Godfree said. "Now I'm a triple threat."

Besides being involved with the Performing Arts Department productions, Godfree joined Socially Together and Naturally Diverse and took part in community service.

"I like to help others," Godfree said, "and I wanted to try something new."

In the fall play, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Freshman Mia Godfree plays the part of Hippolyta. "Performing arts are my life. I love the stage," she said.

Aahron Whitehead
JaKobe Wilbon
Jo`nesha Wilder
Akyona Williams
Alyssia Williams
Aneia Williams
Briana Williams
Brittney Williams
Cynthia Williams

Dea`vion Williams
Jasmine Williams
Robert Williams
Shaina Williams
Elisha Winbush
Jayden Wise
Meagan Wise
Cameron Woods
Keyerra Woods

Ronald Woods
Shianne Woods
Jayla Wright
Jadah Yanders
Zion Young
Abigail Zahora

Illaha Abdul
Cheyenne Adams
Jalen Adams
Areeana Adeniyi
Opeyemi Akinbobuyi
Gerald Akujobi Jr.

Indaneja Alexander
Ebonie Ali
Adrian Allen
Jenise Allen
Kaitlyn Ammerman
Abigayle Anderson

Brandon Anderson
Angela Arellano
Nana Asabere
Sairah Asghar
Kathleen Aton
TyRaye Austin

Breonna Baggett
Michael Baker Jr.
Antonio Balducci
Ashli Ballard
Anthony Banks
Traevon Banks

Va`Quon Banks
Quinten Barnslater Jr.
Fernanda Barrera
Demond Beatty
Jennifer Bedolla
Brittany Bell

Kendall Best
Quionte` Biffle
Madison Blackwell
Unique Blakely
Lamanda Bledson
Donnovan Blue

Aaron Booker
Derrick Bowling Jr.
Jerry Boyd
Renee Bozeman
Malik Bradley
Brandell Bradshaw

Ricky Braggs
Branden Bramson
Ronald Brewer
Kamari Bridges
Wakeylon Briner
Waukesha Briner

Morgan Brinker
Samuel Brnicky
Samantha Brooks
Suzanna Broom
Brianna Brown
Timoya Bryant

Class Officers of 2017
Front row: Secretary Morgan Brinker, Treasurer Princess Graham; Back row: Vice President Jahnari Pruitt, President Breshaye Spear.

Officers lead in their own ways

Preparing class t-shirts for the student-faculty game, getting students involved and organizing fundraisers have kept the sophomore class officers busy.

Breshaye Spear said she has a deep passion for her education. She hopes to show her leadership skills by being a person who invites creativity.

"I want at least 90 percent of this class to pass all of their classes," Spear said.

Jahnari Pruitt said her determination allows her to do anything she puts her mind to. Pruitt enjoys writing poetry. She is a member of the Art Club and Jazz Band.

"I am extremely determined, no matter what. If the class wants it, I will do everything in my power to get it done," Pruitt said.

A member of the orchestra, Morgan Brinker participates in the Dance Team and Bio Builder for fun.

"I offer a great sense of realism and great opinions," Brinker said. "I bring everybody back to earth."

Princess Graham, the secretary in Student Government, said she is organized, respectful, trustworthy and reliable.

"If something needs to be done by a certain time," Graham said, "I will either have it done by that time or before that time."

Each officer brings something distinct to the group, but they all try to complement each other as they work toward class goals.

Torian Bryant
Vanessa Bush
Christopher Bynum
Shakayla Bynum-Crenshaw
Isaac Caballero
Jacob Cabrera
Kamari Cage
Azariah Campbell
Symone Campero

Deangelo Cannon
Maria Carbajal
Roberto Carbajal
Tyler Carlisle
Austin Carrero
Autumn Carrero
Arianna Carrillo
Julianna Carrillo
Precious Carter

Alex Carter III
Da'Vionne Caruthers
Roy Castellanos
Jalen Catron
Kevin Celestino
Christian Chambers
Christine Chambers
Alexandra Chambliss
Tequila Chandler

Class of 2017

Deion Charleston Jr.
Marshon Clark Jr.
Jalah Cleveland
Brittany Coleman
Darshaun Coleman
Alanna Collins
Isobel Collins
Ivan Cook Jr.
Erika Cooper

Perry Coria Jr.
Aaron Corralez
Angela Coulter
Warren Cowherd
Keenan Crawford
Tatyanah Cross
Elizabeth Croy
Calvin Cruse Jr.
Antonio Cruz Jr.

Nicolette Cummins
Dakari Cundiff
Jack Daniel
Darryn Daniels
Camay Davis
Isaiah Davis
James Davis
Jazaniel Davis
Karrington Davis

Kyle Davis
Michael De La Pena
Emily DeCausemaker
Karla DeLeon
Alton Desadier III
Mouhamed Diallo

Moises Diaz
Ja`Various Dixon
Shauntanelle Dixon
Clara Dobbin
Breanne Downing
Erica Dugue

Halina Duke
Hannah Duran
Zachary Dziki
Melinda Easton
Jeffery Eddins Jr.
Jakobe Edmond

Royal Eldridge
Ronald Epting
Matthew Ervin
Ceana Escalante
Anthony Fassoth
Aurora Fassoth

Aisha Faulkner
Isaiah Ferguson
Ashlee Fields
Kevin Fields
Carolyn Fleming
Alexandria Flowers

DaiQuan Ford
ShaiVon Ford
Daria Forrest
Terrell Foster Jr.
Alicia Frazier
Dylan Freeman

Jade Frison
Ivori Fulton
Mikal Funches
Jei`Avonni Gage
Alina Garcia
Delshaun Garner III

Jacqueline Garza
Daquan Gibson
Mekhayla Gibson
Eugene Gibson Baker
Sheteka Gibson Baker
Adrian Gibson-Moreno

Cheyenne Gidley
Jamila Gipson
Darrel Glass III
Covieyon Glover
Thomas Golden Jr.
Cynthia Gomez

Wright balances sports, health

Sophomore Jasmine Wright needed to learn quickly how to juggle her diabetes and sports.

In August, she became 1 of 15,000 children who are annually diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, according to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

Wright said she was not upset or scared when she found out.

"I have type 1 diabetes," Wright said. "I can't produce insulin as well as I could before."

The diagnosis hasn't changed much for Wright.

"It doesn't feel like I have it," she said. "I feel like I did before I was diagnosed a diabetic."

With her recent diagnosis, Wright said she must take specific precautions before each practice or game.

"First, I have to check my blood sugar levels to make sure I am fine. If low, I have to eat a snack around 15 carbs before practice and games, and then check my blood sugar levels 20 minutes later, but if high, I don't have to do anything," she said.

When Wright is on the basketball court, her diabetes has no negative effect on her performance.

"I don't really see a difference in her performance," Coach Amy Govert said. "Of course, we have to check her blood sugar levels, but other than that, there isn't any difference."

Wright's friend, Sophmore Leslie Hardin, echoes that thought.

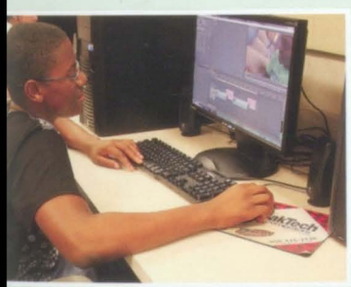
"I don't see a negative performance," Hardin said. "I actually see her going harder and harder to beat her diabetes."

In a game against Andrean, Sophomore Jasmine Wright drives the ball down the lane. "I was dribbling the ball down the court when one of the players was coming up, so I shot the ball and it went in," Wright said.

Matthew Gonzalez
Tiffanie Goodman
Jay`lon Gordon
Osan Gordon
Isaac Graham
Princess Graham
David Green Jr.
Austin Griffith
Nicole Groleau

Olivia Guevara
Victor Gutierrez
Adonis Hall
Ahmad Hall
Leslie Hardin
Tasha Hardin
JayLynn Hardrick
Clarissa Haro
Sydney Harper

DeVante Harris
Lawrence Harris
Taejah Harris
Joseph Harris III
Nicholas Harsma
Larissa Hart
Kendall Heffner-Woodson
Christopher Hendrix
Angel Hernandez



third hour advanced video oduction class, Sophomore hristopher Howard works on an pening for the Friday Show. "You ed a good amount of experience cause you'll only have four days in der to get your assignment done," oward said.

Howard works with upperclassmen in PNN

Within the Pirates News Network classroom, most students are experienced upperclassmen.

Sophomore Christopher Howard knew he had to up his game to be at the level of his fellow classmates.

"It's difficult, but I like challenges," Howard said. "There will be a lot of new students coming in, but not many experienced people, so I'll have to work even harder to get the stories done."

Like all students in the production class, Howard took Basic PNN to qualify for the advanced class. He also had to make sure he used good time management skills to get his stories done.

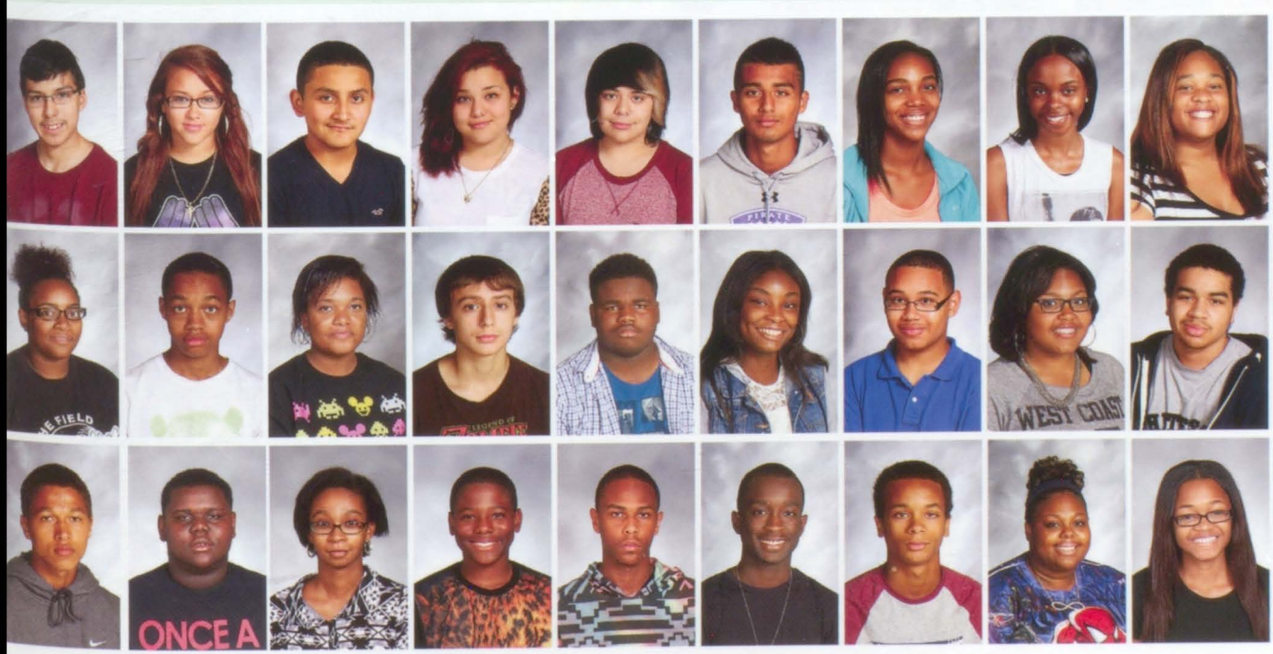
"In order to get the stories done, the students have to outline their time and figure out how they can complete what they need to have done for that week," PNN Adviser Mr. Brian Past said.

He may have been the youngest student in the class, but he "was not without experience" when Mr. Past taught students what needed to be done.

Still, he had to make sure his weekly project was completed on time, often staying after school on short notice.

Howard still felt that PNN was a good class to be in.

"I want to do broadcasting when I get older," Howard said. "I like to take an idea and turn it into something people can actually see."



Cezar Hernandez
Monica Hernandez
Rogelio Hernandez
Yulissa Hernandez
Esteban Hernandez Jr.
Oscar Hernandez Jr.
Cherise` Higgins
Destiny Hill
Jayla Hill

Shaylon Hill
Henry Hill III
Cynthia Hindmon
Dale Holley
London Holley
Ke`Ayzia Holliday
Leroy Holliday Jr.
Makayla Hollingsworth
Michael Hollowell Jr.

Romeo Hoover
Aaris Howard
Aunteria Howard
Christopher Howard
Iren Howard
Jordan Howard
Jason Howell
Jazmine Huffmon
Ashlei Hunt

Olivia Hunt
Darius Hutch
Donuai Hutch
Casey Hyland
Mariahcruz Igartua
LaAshtiana Ivey

Marija Ivic
Jonah Jackson
Kalea Jackson
Kameron Jackson
Robert Jackson
DeWayne Jackson Jr.

Brittany Jakubowicz
Charysse James
Keanu Jenkins
Justin Jerry
Leticia Jimenez
Anya Johnson

JaeLenn Johnson
Michael Johnson
Shawntez Johnson
TasMarie Johnson
Tyrese Johnson
Willow Johnson

Moses Johnson Jr.
Kayla Johnson-Owens
Jayden Jolley
Adoria Jolly
Arkayla Jones
Avvione Jones

De`Jah Jones
Gelena Jones
Ivory Jones
Jerrahmia Jones
Mary Jones
Tyler Jones

Tyler Jones
Montel Jones Jr.
Kathryn Jurczyk
Samantha Kale
Ashley Katz
Keano Keenon

Sean Keith
Vantron Kelley Jr.
Yolanda Kelly
Darius Kendall
Precious Key
Jermaine Kimbrough

Jermell Kimbrough
Linda King
Nyjah King
Terra King
Kenneth Kirkham Jr.
James Kirklen Jr.

In this photo, Sophomore Cynthia Hindmon captures the Chicago skyline. "The picture says more than you think it says," Hindmon said. Hindmon said that she is very proud of the photo because it only took one shot.

Hindmon inspired by capturing life through photography

Sophomore Cynthia Hindmon believes a picture is worth a thousand words.

"Photography is indescribable. It's a chance to capture life in a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. A picture has more words than you can say," Hindmon said.

Hindmon said she first took interest in photography when her father came home with a camera. Shortly after, he began making money with the photographs he took. With easy access to her father's camera, Hindmon gave it a try and fell in love.

Hindmon said she would like to pursue directing as a career choice. Some of her favorite directors are Tim Burton, Wes Anderson, Quentin Tarantino and Kevin Smith.

"Photos are the most important thing in making a movie. Without the pictures and videos, you don't have a movie," Hindmon said.

Instead of developing her photos, she decided to share them with the world by posting them online. She used Instagram to show off her photography.

When she isn't pursuing her passion for photography, Hindmon is singing or participating in Thespian Troupe.

"She can act, sing and play guitar. She's a triple threat," said Thespian Troupe Sponsor Mr. Thomas Mackey.

Kyle Klingaman
Justin Knox
Andrew Kopca
Joseph Krutz
Richard Lacefield
Zacharia Landor
Marshae Lane
Simone Lara
Carnisa Laster

Fabienne Laurisch
Carissa Lewis
Najah Lewis-Singleton
Roosevelt Liddell
Jermaine Lipscomb
Akil Lloyd
Tevon Lockett
Kevin Lockett II
Alexis Lopez

Cassandra Lopez
Justin Lovings
Christian Luckett
Jorge Luna
Paulina Lupercio
Ashlee Luttinen
Jerome Lynch II
Alicia Maclin
Xavier Madera

Sophomore Aleecia Niezgoda shows off her style. "My style comes from everywhere. I don't really get it from a certain place," Niezgoda said.

Niezgoda creates her own style through her outfits

When shopping for clothing, Sophomore Aleecia Niezgoda leans toward the clearance section. With an outfit in mind, Niezgoda scours the racks for the perfect pieces to complete it.

People may describe Neizgoda's style as scene, a mix of punk rock, indie and emo fashion that became popular in the early 2000s.

"I usually go to flea markets or Walmart. I pick stuff from the clearance rack or whatever is on sale," Niezgoda said.

Niezgoda first started dressing with her unique style when she realized she wanted to be different. Today, students recognize her for her head-turning style.

"When I was little, my grandmother used to dress me, and then I got old enough, and she started letting me dress myself. Then on, I knew I wanted to be different," Niezgoda said.

Two years ago, when Niezgoda met her boyfriend, Junior Oscar De La Cruz, he said he was in awe of her style.

"No one dresses like her. She stands out," De La Cruz said.

"A lot of people say I look awesome or nice," Niezgoda said. "This is why I dress differently. I want to be different."

Jazmyne Magee
Taylor Maj
Re`nee Mallett
Matthew Mallon
Jaylynn Malone
Kennedy Marshall
Thomas Marshall IV
Mercedes Martin
Alan Martinez

Daniel Martinez
Mariana Martinez
Matthew Martinez
Jlah Massie
Ashley Matthews
Alexandria Matzaris
Asia Maynor
Rommelo Mayo
Megan Mays

Harold McBeth III
Kyle McCallister
Rachel McChristian
Jaylah McClarin
Rae`Sean McClendon III
Symone McCray
Markeya McDowell
Terrance McGee
Theodore McGhee

Kadarius McKinney
Elijah McLean
Mahqueese McMillan
Mileek McMillan
Briyauna McNeal
Carlos Mejia

Israel Melendez III
Tashauna Mensah
Mallorie Michalak
Marcus Miller
Raymond Miller Jr.
Walik Millsap

Sharrod Mitchell
Alisha Mongold
Jaia Montgomery
Brian Moore
Diamond Moore
Dominique Moore

Maxwell Moore
Shannan Moore
Quiana Moorehead
Jailand Morgan
Zarria Moss
Anna Mryszuk

Jared Muiser
Justin Nabors
David Nash Jr.
Dajon Newton
Deven Nguyen
Aleecia Niezgoda

Marcus Norton
Nehemiah Nunnery
Kaci O`Neal
John Ohiani-Jegede
Heather Osorio
Skyjulia Otterness

Ranier Palmer
Shannon Pardue Jr.
Ah`Sia Parker
DeJavon Parker
Brittany Parks
Kailyn Patillo

Shantelle Patterson
Dennis Patterson Jr.
Infinity Patton
Natalie Paz
Isaiah Pearson
Makayla Pearson

Grettel Peralta
Carlos Perez
Faith Perry
Jakoby Perry
Diontae Phillips
Kyrah Pirtle

As she stands and gestures, Sophomore Jahnari Pruitt recites her poem "Chamelion." "My poem is about how hard it is to fit in and how 'she', who is really just me, has to put on different faces to be accepted, even though she doesn't recognize them herself," Pruitt said.

Pruitt aims to share her love of poetry

Her ability to combine complex metaphors and imagery in her writing allowed Sophomore Jahnari Pruitt to become the first freshman on the varsity Permanent Ink team last year.

As a young poet, Pruitt was able to show off her talent to the community by participating in "Louder than a Bomb," a competition the club attends annually.

Permanent Ink Sponsor Mr. David Hossler said the competition in Chicago occurs over the course of four weekends in February and March.

Fellow club members say they appreciate Pruitt's contribution to the team.

"Everyone on the team loves Jahnari. They even call her Jah-Na-Na," Mr. Hossler said.

Pruitt said poetry opened up literary doors for her and helped her with sentence fluency and word choice.

"Poetry helps me arrange my ideas in an artful and creative way. Poetry makes me more outspoken. For people who really know me, I don't talk unless I have something to say," Pruitt said.

Pruitt said she began writing poetry in the sixth grade at her church and plans to remain in Permanent Ink throughout high school.

With her mother as a role model, Pruitt hopes to become a high school English teacher.

"I want to share the beauty of poetry with the teenage community," Pruitt said.

Zakiyyah Pope
D'Vonne Porter
Michael Porterfield Jr.
Nathan Potter
Elgin Prewitt
Samantha Proper
Jahnari Pruitt
Breonna Pulphus
Jazzybell Quinones

Zakariyya Ra Sun
Cesar Ramirez
David Ramirez
Sharee Ramsey
Aryal Randall
Steven Rasmussen
Leah Ray
Iziah Readus
Rico Reed

Amiya Reina
Chris Rias
Tyron Rias Jr.
Joshel Richards
Qwentin Richmond
Nickoleus Riley
Regenea Riley
Tatiana Riley
Veronica Rios

One of top readers, Aton finds perfect happiness in books

Sophomore Kathleen Aton's head can always be found in a good book.

If a book is good enough, Aton said, she can read it in a day or two.

As one of the top readers in her class and in the school, bookworm Aton was only 13 points away from the top teacher over the summer.

"Sometimes I finish two books in one day," Aton said.

Aton admitted her love of reading wasn't always strong.

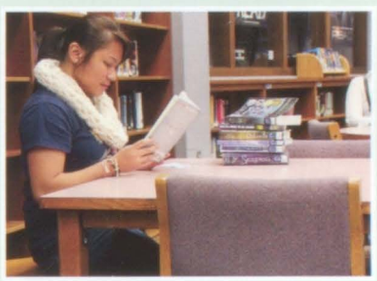
"Before fifth grade, I didn't like reading," she said, "but I had a really good English teacher who got me into reading."

Biology teacher Mrs. Patricia Robison said that Aton is a dedicated student who loves to read.

"I would describe Kathleen as a heavy reader who has 'novel addiction disorder'," Mrs. Robison said.

Aton said that she isn't surprised that she is one of the top readers, and she added that she wouldn't mind being an author someday.

"I also like writing," she said, "so combining the two would be a perfect match."



In her perfect comfort zone in the Media Center, Sophomore Kathleen Aton has her head stuck in her favorite book.

Maria Rivera
Julianne Roberts
Elisha Robins
Aliyah Robinson
Karina Robledo
Sean Roche'
Rachel Rodriguez
Stephen Rodriguez
Yesenia Rodriguez

Jessicca Rone
David Rosa
Madison Ross
Elijah Royal
Chrissey Ruffin
Christopher Ruffin Jr.
Julian Russell
Maurice Russell Jr.
Terry Sabbath

Amber Saenz
T'Wuan Sallee-Lindsay
Dakota Sampson
Anthony Sams Jr.
Andrea Sanchez Lamas
Kayla Sandridge
Steffan Santiago
Joel Schwartz
Jaylin Scott

Ja`Nesha Shelby
Brandon Shelton
Brook Shelton
Jalen Sherwood
Alexus Shirrells
Nitsa Shomo

Divine Short
Alexus Simpson
Kaja Sims
Davon Smith
Justin Smith
Kailyn Smith

Katelyn Smith
Kendrick Smith
Kenyatta Smith
Mi-Chae` Smith
Scarlett Smith
Sydney Smith

Amari Smith McPhee
Ashleyrose Sparks
Breshaye Spear
Lauren Stanley
Hayley Steichen
A`Sonta' Stewart

Destiny Stewart
Martell Stitt
Ari Stone -Tekeste
Michael Strain
Stephanie Stringer
Alfred Stubbs III

Meyianna Sullivan
Eufracia Taisipic
Aaliyah Tapia
Aisha Taylor
Joy Taylor
Roman Taylor

Taj Taylor
Cordero Terrell
Kylen Terrell
Victoria Terry
Georgia Thayer
Kejuan Thomas

Raege'ne Thomas
Renajah Thomas
Tyreak Thomas
Kiarra Thompson
Serena Thormann
Ryan Thornton

Anthony Timmons Jr.
Isaac Tolliver
Angela Toomer
Milan Trajkovski
Alonna Traylor
Daniel Tucker

With a pointed foot, Sophomore Nia Wells maintains her leg hold. "Double-toes is my favorite technique because I get really high in the air and they look really nice," Wells said.

Wells expresses herself through dance

Sophomore Nia Wells has been putting in many hours, performing and practicing since she was four, to show people the thing she loves to do most: dance.

Wells has been dancing nonstop to be like her older sister, Pamela Wells.

"My sister used to tap dance and got to perform for the mayor of St. Louis," Wells said.

With her first year on the Dance Team underway, Wells said she is not letting anything get in her way of getting better.

"I feel like I need to work on keeping my energy up more while dancing and sharper motion placement," Wells said.

Dance Team Coach Celia Pollard said she sees a lot of potential in Wells.

"Nia is one of our junior-level dancers," Coach Pollard said. "However, she has nice flexibility. I see a lot of potential and have high expectations for her."

Wells said she loves the feeling she gets while dancing, whether performing with a group or solo.

"I prefer performing with a group of girls because dancing with others makes the performance look cleaner," Wells said.

"Dancing helps me express my feelings. All my problems go away. I can be myself, and it just makes me happy," Wells said.

During the summer of 2013, Nia participated in a competition held in O'Falloe, Missouri.

"I performed jazz and contemporary. It was for the Best Dance and Talent Center, and I placed High Gold and Gold," Wells said.

Blake Turley
Justin Turner Jr.
Ciara Tyrone
Nijah Tyson
Kavitha Udumula
Hannah Umbarger
Taylor Upshaw
Anthony Valdez
Andrew Vander Woude

Allison Vanderbilt
Franciso Vazquez
Dominic Velez
Jennifer Villanueva
Kyrann Walker Jr.
Dondre` Wall
Mitchell Ward Jr.
James Warner IV
Nikita Weaver

Christopher Webb
Nicole Webster
Kierra Wells
Nia Wells
Antonia` West
Alyssia Whiteside
Areiana Whiteside
Cameron Wilbon
Ayron Williams

Moore uses the viola to speak the langauge of music

Sophomore Maxwell Moore prefers to express himself in the language of music.

In sixth grade, after meeting with high school orchestra students, Moore decided to give the viola a chance and has been playing ever since.

He said the violin was too high and the cello was too big.

"Since I am a clumsy person, I probably would have broken it," he said.

Playing the viola allows him to express himself.

"Music is my way of speaking my own language," Moore said.

When presented with the opportunity to perform in the high school's advanced orchestra, Moore took a chance.

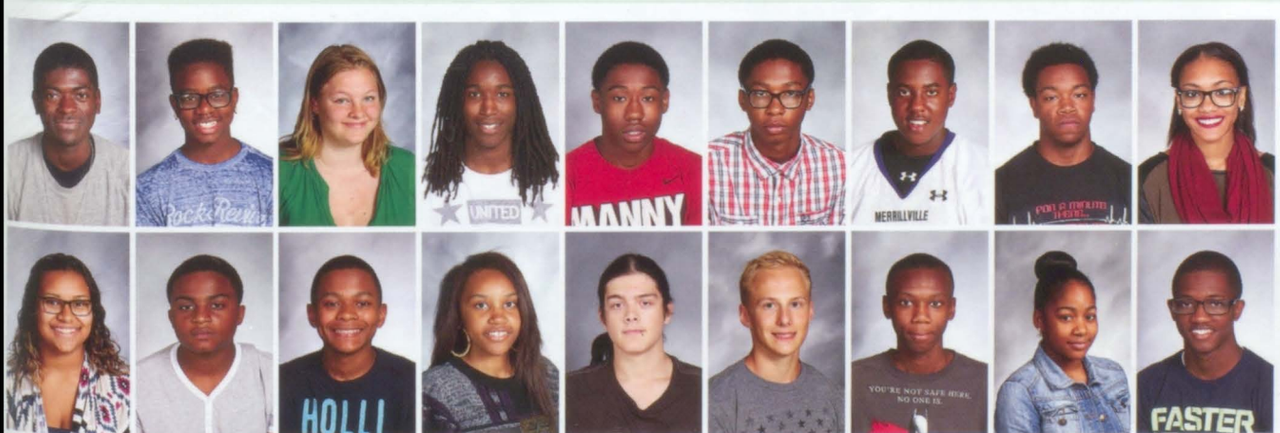
"Last year, when Mr. Lang came in, they needed more people to join advanced orchestra since all he had was seniors. He decided to let freshmen audition, and everyone knew I was going to audition, and I made the cut and I moved to second chair last year," Moore said.

During his sophomore year, Moore earned the position of principal violist after a playing test.

Moore is a member of the Northwest Indiana Youth Symphony and the All State Orchestra.

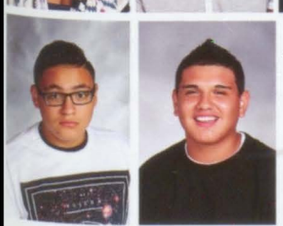
"He is a very, very talented young man who has the ability to do whatever he wants to with music," Orchestra teacher Mr. Jeff Lang said, "whether he decides to teach or play."

In class playing his viola, Sophomore Maxwell Moore focuses on the music to be sure to hit the right notes. "Music has just always been easier than sports, drawing and just everything for me," Moore said.



Devyn Williams
Israel Williams
Jillian Williams
Lamonteon Williams
Laquant Williams
Robert Williams Jr.
Willie Williams III
Emmanuel Willis
Mya Wilson

Natalie Winburn
Jaron Woods
Tyler Woods
De`Jah Woodson
Nathan Woodworth
Benjamin Worthington
Alonzo Wright
Jasmine Wright
Justin Young



Joshua Zuniga
Alfredo Zuniga Jr.

Camera shy

Justus Alexander
Mickale Bridgeman
Justin Castro
Taylor Cazy
Jose Garcia
Mohammad Hamad
Joseph Hayes
Dewayne Holbrook
Tiyanna John
Armani Leal
Torryn Lee
Andrew Leon
Maryam Muhammad
Jayla Nelson
Patrisha Phillips
Keveonta Robinson
Daniel Skonieczn
Maxwell Stevens
Carl Stokes
Derrick Taylor
LaVonte Thompson
Devon VanLew
Anjil Vazquez
Janae Washington
Michael Williams

Briana Abbott
Maya Abdullah
Joseph Abeyta III
Juan Adame
Darius Adams
Miracle Akins

Navia Alexander
Myles Alford
Mahmud Ali
Subhi Ali
Chanita Allen
Madison Allen

Jose Alvarez II
Alexis Anderson
Emmanual Anderson
Ashton Anekwe
Nicki Angotti
Tyler Argullin

Avari Arthur
Alivia Ash
Daniel Aurel
Wesley Babilonia
Devon Bailey
Keith Baker Jr.

Jourdin Bandy
Brian Baran
Maximillian Barnes
Antonio Basemore
Alize Beard
Mario Bedolla Jr.

Adrianna Bell
Brenna Bell
Jason Bell Jr
Kelsey Bennett
Jamie Bhe
Belen Bickell

Laura Bier
Brendon Bistrican
Alphonso Blackwell III
Promise Blakely
Dominique Bland
Shania Blue

Tionna Bond
Donyel Borom
Jada Bowden
Victor-Jacolbi Boyd
Amari Bradley
India Bradley

Joshua Bradley
Austin Brakley-Lain
Daija Bravo
Melissa Brayfield
Lacy Bridgeman
Kamiko Bridges

Officers for the Class of 2016
Front row: Secretary Casey Harvey;
Back row: President Anastasia Campos, Vice president Viridiana Carrillo.

Class of 2016 shooting for unity, creating lasting impact

Getting students to participate more in class activities, attend meetings and create unity are top priorities for those involved in making the class of 2016's final years at MHS memorable.

Class officers and sponsors are busy organizing class activities, setting up fundraisers and volunteering to increase their class image and get more students involved.

"Our main goal is to raise more money for our class," Vice President Viridiana Carrillo said.

The more class members attend meetings, the more knowledge they have of class activities, and word gets out about what is going on in their class.

"During class meetings, we give out food to get more people to come," Carrillo said.

Class President Anastasia Campos said that class officers and sponsors have a lot of ideas to bring to the class, and everyone involved puts in their best efforts to plan fun activities exclusive to the Class of 2016.

"When more people are involved in our class activities, it creates unity among us all," Campos said. "My goal as class president is to create a united class."

Makayla Bridges
Maquer Bridges
Dyana Brinson
Adrian Brooks
Ariella Broom
Antonese Brown
Jazmine Brown
Joshua Brown
Kiara Brown

Terrell Brown
Anthony Brown Jr.
De`Vontai Bryant
Triston Buenrostro
Jomaria Burns
Kaila Byers
Brittney Cain
Jaivionne Calvert
Cindy Cameron

Anastasia Campos
Deanna Cannon
Tranette Cargo
Dominique Carpenter
Donovan Carpenter
Viridiana Carrillo
Tanisa Carter
Justice Cason
Liane Chambers

Class of 2016

Alana Charles
Courtney Chavez
Marcel Cherry
Leslie Christie
Cameron Clark
Ciara Clark
Gabriel Clark
James Clark III
Jessica Cole

De`Shaun Coleman
Zantrell Collins
Victoria Colon
DeAnthony Comanse
Tela Combs
Arianne Conn
Deontai Cooper
Antonio Cornelius Jr.
Jacob Covaciu

Kaylon Craft
Casey Crane
Mirkeisha Crawford
Corey Crawford Jr.
Noah Criswell
Jordan Crook
Symantha Croy
Brandon Cummins
Cydney Cuthrell

James Danaher Jr.
Caitlin Darrell
Cheryl Daugherty
LeArnetta Davies
Anna Davis
John-Tearique Davis

Linus Davis
Shaconda Davis
Jermaine Davis II
Allanisette Dawson
Jada Day
Marlana de Moraes
Emili

Oscar DeLa Cruz
Chad Deline
Alexis Delk
Dean Denisiuk II
Danielle Dewees
David Diaz

Fatouma Dika
Deanetra Dixon
Erica Dixon
Samantha Dixon
Nicholas Doneski
Amber Drake

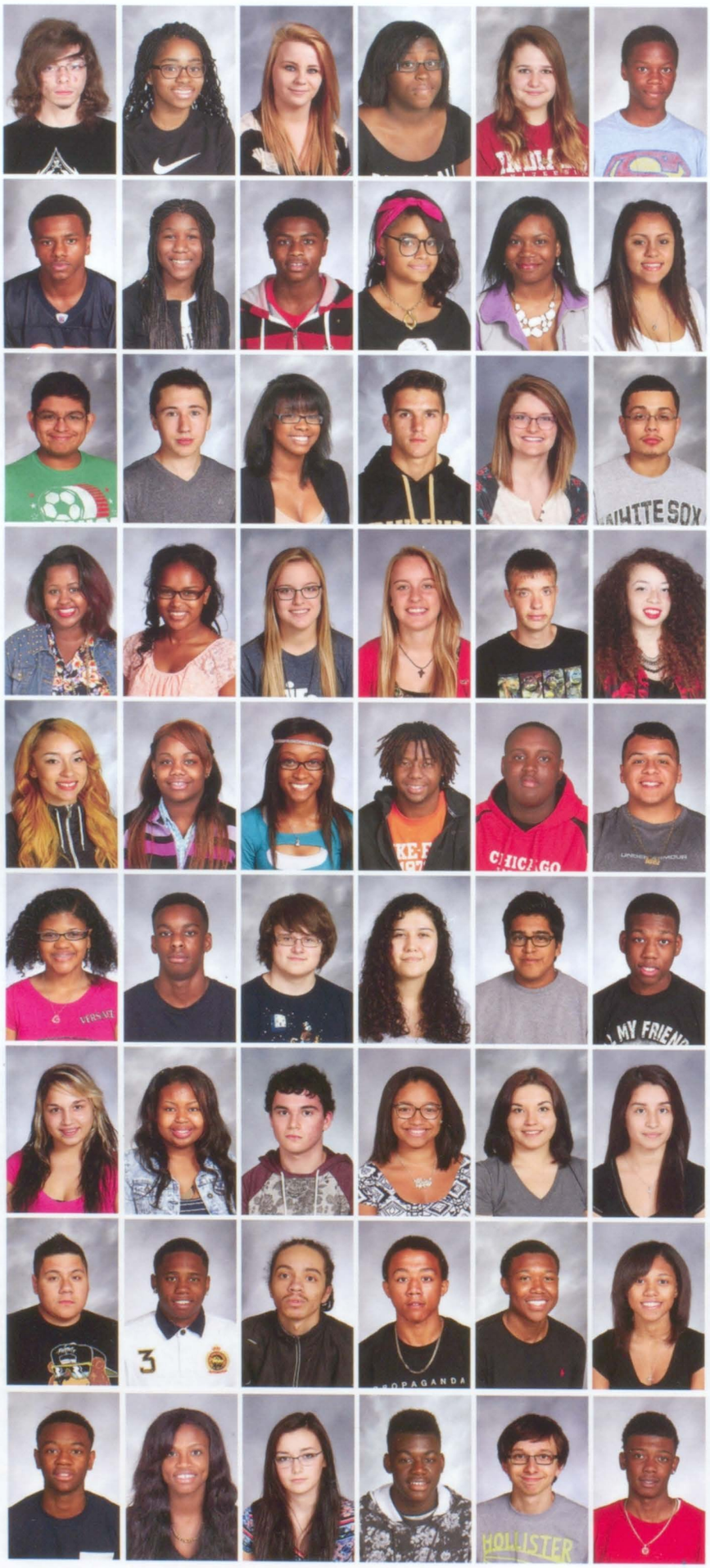
Selena Drake
Destina`E Dubois
Jada Duff
Kameron Duke
Cameron Dunlap
Raymond Duque Jr.

Arielle Dye
Vernice Eastland
Zachary Feign
Andrea Fernandez
Alfonso Figueroa
Jalen Forrest

Tabitha Fox
Domonique Franklin
David Froglia
Haley Funches
Sarita Gaona
Brenda Garcia

Luis Garcia
David Gatson IV
Anthony Gembara
Andre George
Jelani Gibson
Kiaeysha Gibson

Anthony Gilbert
Ke ara Gill
Emily Glover
Justen Gordon
Kevin Gouwens
Justin Grady



Choosing alternate diet helps Brayfield stay healthy

Affected by the way animals were being treated, Junior Melissa Brayfield has chosen to abstain from meat.

Two years ago, Melissa thought eliminating meat from her diet would be a healthy alternative and allow her to save some animals at the same time. She gave it a try.

"I make my own food. I eat a lot of fruit and imitation meat," Melissa said.

Chicken was harder to give up.

Melissa continued eating chicken for a year and a half until she gave up eating meat completely.

"I stopped eating chicken a couple months ago because I found out it was easier to eat fake chicken than I thought," Melissa said.

Choosing an alternative eating lifestyle also affected Melissa's family.

"My parents and older brother disapprove of her choice because she doesn't eat protein," her brother, Senior Mitchell Brayfield, said. "But my younger brother and I feel it's her own lifestyle and it is healthy for her."

With the support of her two brothers, Melissa said she was able to continue.

"At first, it was very hard to stop eating meat," Melissa said. "It was only hard because it was always something I ate, but now I don't even miss not eating meat anymore."

For her noon meal in the cafeteria, Junior Melissa Brayfield finds her chicken flavor Ramen Noodles an easy substitute to chicken. "It is an easy alternative because it is easy to make and I can carry it. I also like it because it is chicken flavored, but there is no chicken in it," Brayfield said.

Destiny Green
Keith Green
Riayn Greene
Tyler Greer
Christian Gridiron
Maya Griffin
Tajanee` Griffin
Kayla Griffith
Kave`t Grooms

Jacqueline Gutierrez
Damien Hagan
Aaliyah Hall
Christian Hamilton
Don Hamilton Jr.
Diamond Hampton
Trevon Hampton
Thomas Hansbury III
Anthony Hardin

Devon Harmon
Deja Harris
Robert Harris Jr.
Casey Harvey
Diamond Harvey
DaVonnicka Head
Alanna Heath
Calena Henderson
De Eryl Henderson

Tanzymore twins race to the Bicycle Motocross track

Most Saturday afternoons, Juniors Nicholas and Tyler Tanzymore can be found at the Bicycle Motocross race track in Hobart.

With inspiration from their family, the Tanzymore twins decided to start racing.

"My dad used to tell us about the times he did BMX, and one day, my mom showed my brother and me a newspaper ad about BMX," Nicholas said, "so we decided to try it."

Despite the challenges of rigorous training, the brothers said they use music to get them into their "zone."

"I like to compete because of the adrenaline rush when trying something new," Tyler said.

In the five years they have been involved in the sport, the Tanzymore twins say they have attracted sponsors, including Bad & Company, Nationals Pit Stop and Be Too Extreme.

"Having sponsors feels good because someone is always there for races," Tyler said. "And if I need bike parts, they provide it."

Nicholas won second place twice in the state championship races.

"Overall, BMX beats any sports out there," Nicholas said. "We don't have to be on a team. If I lose, I can only blame myself."

On their bikes in the middle of a stunt, Juniors Tyler and Nicholas Tanzymore jump from one part of the double in the track to the next. "I want to be the best," Nicholas said. Nicholas said he is now ranked sixth in the district and Tyler is ranked eighth.

Michael Henderson Jr.
Samia Henley
Alexis Henney
Andrew Hernandez
Isaiah Hernandez
Brittany Hicks
Maya Hill
Me`Oesha Hill
Joshua Hiller

David Hinton II
Diamonta Hodge
Ya`Nique Holden
Marissa Hollins
Sharod Holmes Jr.
Tiffany Holst
Wendell Hopson Jr.
Da`Montay Host
Chloe Howard

Rheed Howerton
Anfernee Hudson
Brandy Hughes
Dashanee` Hunter
Tammiah Ingram
Timisha Ivie
Ashiala Jackson
Jo Anna Jackson
Sharice Jackson

Charles Jacobs II
Eryn Jenkins
Maurice Jenkins
Patrice Jenkins
Mariah Jimenez
Ashley Johnson

Davida Johnson
Derreke Johnson
Jacquel Johnson
Jada Johnson
Le`Montrell Johnson
Marchaun Johnson Jr.

Antonyo Jones
Beatrice Jones
Carlton Jones
Jailyn Jones
Jaylen Jones
Jayson Jones

Thomas Jones
Rico Joseph
Monica Juarez
Hunter Kaiser
Kiara Key
Amber King

Odestine King
Alonzo Kirk
LaTavia Knight
Rebecca Knight
Hope Krajnak
Alexis Krutz

Tyeisha Lackey
David Lagunas
Qu'Juan Lane
Darren Latiker
Anthony Lee
Tra`Mont Lee

Timeisha Liggins
D`Nay Lightning
Jonathan Lipp
Brandon Long Jr.
Lauren Lopez
Oralia Lopez

Crystal Lopez de Lara
Aaron Lott
Alysa Lucero
Yvonne Luna
Sho`n Mabone
Chamar Maclin

Veronica Magallanes
John Mai
Jalin Major
Leia Malcolm
Jillian Manis
Christian Marquez

While looking at her sheet music, Junior Timisha Ivie plays her favorite violin piece, the first movement of Max Bruchâ's "Concerto Number One in G Minor."

Ivie achieves inside and outside of school

Many students participate in activities outside of school, whether it's an extracurricular, volunteer work or something they just love to do.

One student who undertakes many pastimes is Junior Timisha Ivie.

She plays instruments yet isn't in the school orchestra, volunteers at community centers and takes part in multiple school clubs.

Ivie has been playing the violin since she was seven years old and the piano since she was six years old.

"Right now, I play the piano and the violin. I get lessons from a private tutor. I also volunteer at The Jones Center in Chicago Heights, Illinois," Ivie said.

While maintaining a 3.7 GPA and a class rank of 11 of 510, Ivie needed to find a way to balance her academics with other activities.

"Time management is key. Also, it's about what is most important to you. To me, my academics and everything outside of school is equally important, so I make it a priority to get everything done," Ivie said.

Ivie was the president of Spanish Club. She worked alongside Spanish teacher Mrs. Monica DaCostaGomez .

"I would call Timisha a very well-rounded and dedicated student," Mrs. DaCostaGomez said. "Even though she has lots of things going on, she takes initiative."

Nathan Martin-Ellison
Jazlyn Martinez
Miguel Martinez
DeAndre Matthews
Aaron McAroy
Marrisa McClelland
Erika McClinton
Jordan McDonald
Kristin McGee

Renay McKenney
Malik McMullan
Ashley Mendez
Tirsa Mercado
Matthew Meux
Michael Mezydlo
Reginald Miller
Rashawn Mills
Kapreacia Mims

Dondre Minnion
Raemere Mitchell
Bree Montgomery
Jara Montgomery
Jayna Moore
Keaireana Moorehead
Deja Morris
Jon Morton
Angel Munchenburg

Playing soccer even though she has frequently occurring injuries, Junior Alanna Heath participates in a game against Highland.

Heath pursues soccer despite many injuries

Veteran soccer player Junior Alanna Heath is no stranger to injuries.

With a sports career that began in the fourth grade, Heath has fractured her ankle, suffered multiple sprains and, more recently, suffered a serious concussion over the course of multiple seasons. A recurring knee problem remains also undiagnosed.

Due to her multiple injuries, Heath knows she must take special care to avoid further injuries.

"I do feel I have to take more precautions, such as wrapping before games and icing throughout the game. I also have to avoid getting hit," Heath said.

The most severe ailment Heath has sustained was a concussion that resulted from a collision with a rival player as she attempted to pull a header.

"We were all kind of shocked because we didn't realize it happened till the next day," Head Soccer Coach Mr. Benjamin Daniel said. "Concussions can happen from the smallest thing. That is why they are scary."

Adam Neal
Isaac Neely
Sean Noonan
Ashley Ojo
Alyssa Ortiz
Jorge Osoria Jr.
Deidra Owens
Nicholas Owens
Antonio Paine Jr.

Briana Palm
Kody Parkham
Diamond Patterson
Ryan Patton
Luis Paz
Brianna Pearson
Paris Pearson
Michael Pearson Jr.
Brandon Pelaquin

Vanessa Peluyera
Gerardo Perez
Jeremiah Perez
Natally Perez
Nazaraih Perez
DeVion Perry
Andre` Peterson Jr.
Breanna Phillips
Frida Pineda

Nicolas Pirtle
Corey Platts Jr.
Daniel Pole III
Armonni Pollard
Deanne Porter
Mariya Pratt

Mario Preciado
Jaliyah Price
Sarah Price
Chelsey Primm
Tiara Pruitt
Imani Purnell

Claribell Quinones
Brianna Raketic
Sara Ramirez
Omar Ramirez Jr.
Koreena Ramos
Marrisa Ramos

Louis Rand
Aryana Randall
Brianna Rangel
Elijah Ray
Olivia Reavley
Rayana Reed

Jacob Reinhart
Amarillis Rentas
Layke Reynolds
DeLaney Richards
Kayvin Richards
A`ona Richardson

Ciora Richardson
La`ish Richardson
Ariana Riley
Theodore Roberts
Tynithia Robinson
Daniel Robles

Bethany Rochefort
Adrian Rodriguez
Tomas Rodriguez Jr.
Brandon Root
Aubren Rosas
Najmi Ruffin

Brittney Rzepczynski
Gia Sadural
Enrique Saenz
Tyhlar Sain
Jessica Salazar
Karina Salazar

Alyssa Sanchez
Sabrina Sanchez
Corey Sanders
Jasmine Sanders
Cornelius Sanders Jr.
Mannsimran Sandhu

On the field, Junior Alysa Lucero cheers alongside her sister Senior Keristen Lucero. "Because I have had a hearing loss since I was little, I learned to read people's lips when they talk to me. When I am cheering, I am able to have a converstation with my family in the stands without saying anything out loud," Alysa said.

Lucero fights for her 'right now'

The phrase "fighting for your life" has special meaning to Junior Alysa Lucero.

As a newborn, Alysa was diagnosed with hypoparathyroidism. Alysa suffers from low blood levels of calcium and high blood levels of phosphorus.

At 18 months, she suffered a reaction to a shot, and doctors diagnosed hearing loss and a speech delay. She was enrolled in speech therapy and began wearing hearing aids.

"I had no idea that I wasn't able to hear a lot of sounds. I was confused when I walked outside and heard the sound of wind for the first time," Alysa said.

Alysa's medical troubles continued as she aged.

At 13, doctors discovered that her right kidney lost function.

"Every time I begin to feel comfortable, something new comes up," Alysa said.

At a checkup her sophomore year, Alysa learned yet another diagnosis, Stage 3 Chronic Kidney Disease. Her left kidney functions at 60 percent.

"Her journey isn't like other people who are sick," her mother Mrs. Karen Lucero said. "You see kids with diabetes who have to check their levels. Alysa's journey is not seen physically. It is an emotional journey."

With continued deterioration in her left kidney function by three percent in the past year, Alysa is faced with the decision to change her lifestyle and hobbies.

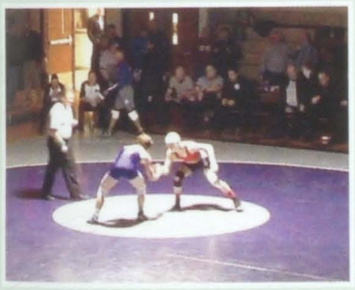
"There's going to come a time when she has to stop living her normal life, like cheering. Is it going to be on her time or is it going to be decided medically?" her father Mr. Raymond Lucero said. "That is the big question."

"I'm not just fighting for my life," Alysa said. "I'm fighting for my 'right now.' I'm fighting for the present."

Hannah Sawyer
DeAyne Scaife
Casllie Scott
Cole Scott
Deja Scott
Jaketa Scott
Miaya Scott
Jonathan Serrato
Adam Serros

Kylah Shackelford
Michael Shannon II
Derel Shell
Bryanna Shelton
Corvon Shelton
Dakota Shelton
Sydney Sheppard
Avery Silva
Kevin Simmons Jr.

Armen Sims
Deja Sims
Kayla Sims
Matthew Sims
Kendra Skinner
Breon Smith
Davon Smith
Elijah Smith
Henry Smith



Under the spotlight, Junior Jacob Covaciu shakes his opponent's hand before the final semi-state match. "I didn't prepare for the match. I just went in with a blank mind and stayed relaxed," Covaciu said. Covaciu said he will never forget the moment when he wrestled in the state finals.

Family motivates Covaciu to commit 100 percent to his sport

From the time he joined the wrestling team as a freshman to his participation on the varsity team, Junior Jacob Covaciu's goal to become the best has remained the same.

"His ability to commit 100 percent is his strength. He does everything to the fullest," Head Coach David Maldonado said. "He spent the spring and summer going to camps and tournaments."

After playing football his freshman and sophomore years, Covaciu decided to focus on wrestling. He ended his sophomore wrestling season in Indianapolis at the state tournament where he took home second place.

"I was happy for him because it was deserving. He put in a lot of time, effort and commitment. He was grateful to make it to state as a sophomore," Coach Maldonado said.

Covaciu said he is determined more than ever to pick up where he left off at the end of his sophomore season.

"I want to wrestle to my full potential and see where it takes me," he said. "I plan to work hard and stay healthy."

Covaciu said he finds his motivation from his family, and he dedicates his matches to them.

"What motivates me is the drive to be the best," Covaciu said. "My grandma has been battling multiple sclerosis for 40 years, and I feel like if she can battle that, then I can handle a wrestling match."

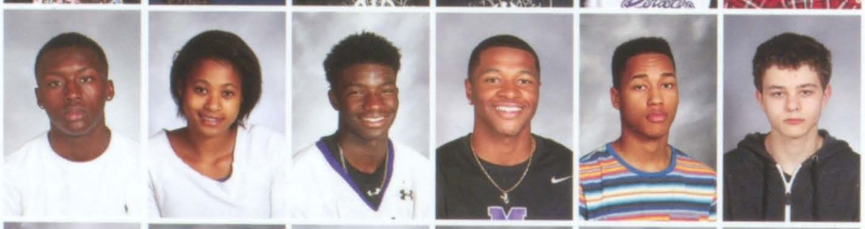
Ireon Smith
Joshai Smith
Khari Smith
Nicole Smith
Regina Smith
Shamari Smith
Thomas Smith Jr.
Garrett Smith Jr.
Khaila Southall

Taylor Span
Daniel Spearman
Jairus Stevens
Gabrielle Stewart
Shawn Streck
Regan Strong
Riley Strong
Sydnee Stubbs
Jarika Sullivan

Jonathan Sutherland
James Sutherland III
Eric Swims Jr.
Nicholas Tanzymore
Tyler Tanzymore
Dalin Tape
Jordan Tate
Daniel Taylor
Isaiah Taylor

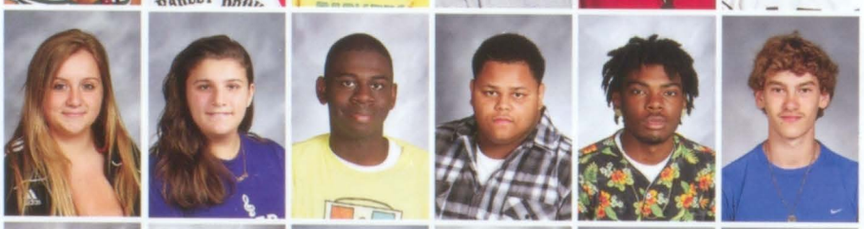
Jazzmyne Taylor
Mackayla Taylor
Myles Taylor
Ryan Taylor
Angela Terry
Raymond Therolus Jr.

Christian Thomas
Aiesha Thompson
Matthew Thompson
Isaiah Thornton
Michael Thornton
Tanner Thurson



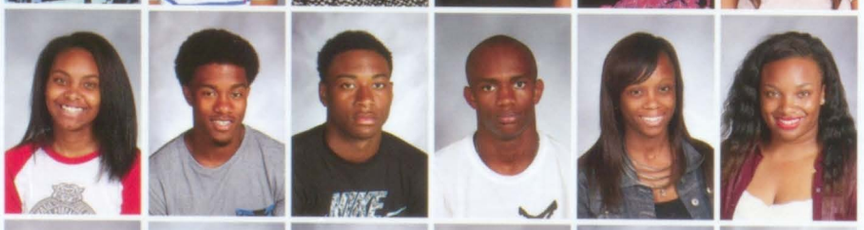
Angelic Tillman
Matthew Tobias
Anthony Tolbert
Isaiah Toodle
Edwin Torres
Anthony Tucker Jr.

Kari Turcotte
Mary Turcotte
Rontrell Turner
Sonni Tyson II
Derrick UnderwoodJr.
John Unmisig



Edgar Valdez
Kiendra Valentine
Nicole Van Nortwick
Terhannia Vaughn
Arturo Velasco
Mary Ann Wallace

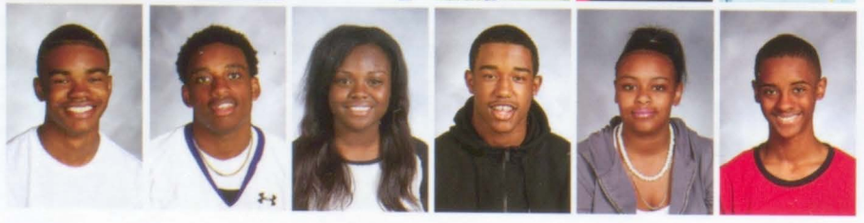
Allyssa Walls
David Walls
James Walters III
Arion Walton
Ashley Walton
Ashley Washington



Brian Watson
Micaela Watson
Nanese Weatherspoon
Kevin Weems
Sarah West
Corrin Wheeler

JoRale Wheeler
Lawrence Whitfield
Demond Wilkins Jr.
Ahveyon Williams
Atoy Williams
Brandon Williams

Drelen Williams
Jalen Williams
Janae Williams
Romell Williams
Teniya Williams
William Williams



To show her daughter Sophia affection, Junior Alyssa Sanchez kisses her. "I never knew how much I could love someone until the day she was born," Sanchez said. Sophia's birthday is December 4, 2013.

Sanchez balances school, motherhood

Junior Alyssa Sanchez knows first-hand the difficulty of balancing school and raising a child.

At 16, she discovered she was pregnant after taking two home pregnancy tests.

Still a child herself, Sanchez did not know exactly what she was going to do or how her family would react.

"Nobody was mad, just upset because my mom had me at a young age and they didn't want me to have to go through what she went through," Sanchez said.

During the pregnancy, Sanchez said it was very difficult to come to school every day. The newfound attention coupled with everyone touching her stomach brought stress upon the expectant mother.

"It's annoying when people I don't even know would touch my stomach," Sanchez said.

Sanchez relied on friends who stayed with her during the pregnancy and after the birth.

"I gave her back massages and carried her book bag to class every day," Junior Fatouma Dika said.

Having a child presented new challenges. Sanchez had to decide on a good doctor for her baby and how she would continue her education.

"I chose my doctor, Mr. Rico, because he was the only doctor that would take me at seven months," Sanchez said.

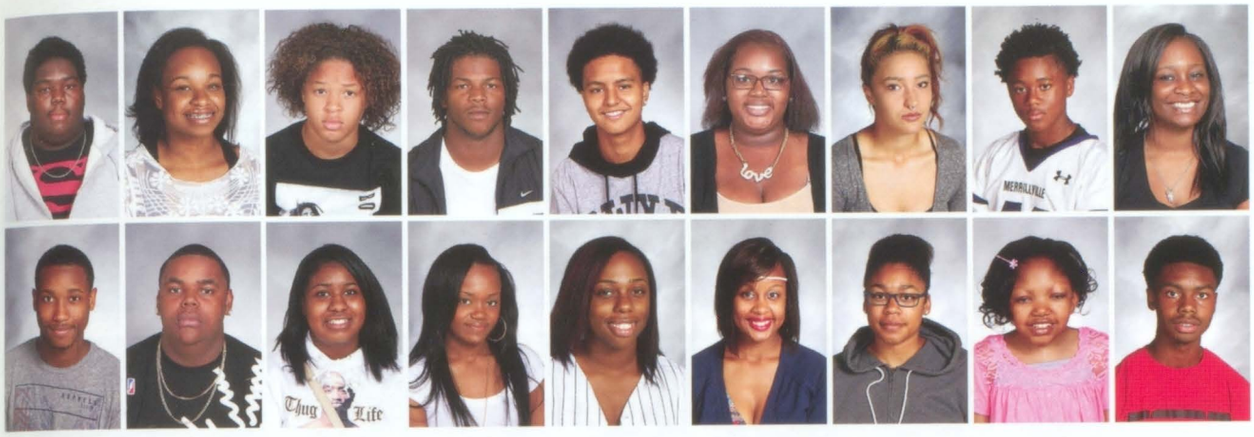
With the support of her child's father, Sanchez was able to prepare for the arrival of her baby girl.

"He was very happy and ready to change diapers," Sanchez said.

After giving birth to her daughter Sophia Gonzalez, returning to school was difficult for Sanchez as both mother and baby have tight schedules.

"She is an attention hog," Sanchez said.

Sanchez said she will not give up, despite the obstacles she faces, and maintaining a B/C average remains "a high priority."



Geremy Williams-Brown
Katherine Williamson
Xakilah Williamson
Dae Shawn Willis
Tyreek Wilson
Lakiima Wingard
Jayana Wolak
Aaron Woodson
Demaria Wright

Derrick Wright
Aaron Wright Jr.
Kiana Wynne
Monique Yarbro
Detra Yarbrough
Marchala Yarbrough
Donmeion Yates
Katrina Yon
Jordan Young

Working on her project, Junior Laura Bier adds a piece to the stellated icosahedron. She said this project reflects her as a person because it is colorful and difficult.

Bier uses 'millions of colored paper' to create complex art

Junior Laura Bier has taken the Japanese art of origami and made it her own.

The word origami originates from the Japanese roots of "ori" meaning folding and "kami" meaning paper. By folding paper, origami artists create different shapes.

"You pull paper and make it look pretty," Bier said.

As an elementary school student, Bier began to practice origami when she was bored.

"I started watching YouTube videos to help me learn," she said.

Bier's favorite type of origami is modular. She uses as many as 30 separate pieces and puts them together to make one.

Bier said she also likes to create the Intersecting Tetrahedron, five pyramids of folded paper pieced together to make a star-like figure.

"My favorite is the Pikachu, which is a box with ears," Junior Yvonne Luna said. "She also made a dodecahedron for one of her math teachers."

Luna said she was there from the beginning of Bier's hobby.

"In fourth grade, I would notice that she had millions of colored papers in her desk," she said.

Luna said she has been supportive through Bier's journey as she learned to make more complex pieces.

"She is really good at it," Luna said, "and it is a good hobby to keep her busy."

"The interesting part of it is the complexity of putting together pieces," Bier said, "when each unit is so simple to make."

Camera shy

James Augusta
Philip Barnes
Brianna Belle
Rosalia Cabello
Oscar Cabrera
Tyree Cole
Julie Craig
Kentrell Finley
Zuhria Hamad
Eriq Harris
Devin Hester
Diamonta Hodge
Donald Hunter
D'Miracle Johnson
Daniel Levenson
Belen London
Michael Mahone
Christian Martinez
Joaquin Morando
Joshua Morando
Dominic Mori
Michael Partee
Jatin Patel
Payshence Shields
Sarah Smith
Rebekah Soto
Matthew Tobias
Katrina Wallace
Raven Warren

During halftime at a football game, Junior Arianne Conn plays her flute. A member of the band for six years, she said she enjoys going to all the games and participating in the competitions. This year's marching show for the Indiana State School Music Association competition was entitled, "A Touch of Buble" and featured songs from the pop artist Michael Buble. "We do the McDonald's Thanksgiving Parade every other year," Conn said.

Faculty

Gerald Akujobi
Robert Albers
Janet Anderson
Joseph Atria
Cheryl Austin
Michelle Barker
Amber Baron
Amy Beckham

Carrie Bedwell
Robert Bedwell
Adeline Bemish
Brad Best
Kathryn Bihlman
Kathleen Bilderback
Jeremy Bilka
Lora Bish

Wade Boise
Harry Boskamp
James Bostic
Theda Bostic Jr.
Janelle Bowen
Sharlyne Buchanan
Connor Buxton
Melissa Byerly

Kristin Campbell
Prezonia Carroll
Shana Chelich
Sarwat Choudhry
Byron Clark
Patrick Coffey
Williemętta Crawford
Damita Crittenden

Bruce Curme
Anthony Curry
Dawn Czuba
Monica DaCostaGomez
Carol Dahlen
Benjamin Daniel
Sarah Daniels
Mark Danielson

Melinda Davis
Dana Deloian
Grace Dewald
Christine Dixon
Pamela Dortch
Nancy Draper
Jeffrey Eaton
Josefina Eliscupides

Colin Elliott
Michael Engle
Meghan Erickson
Jeffrey Fairbairn
Mark Fairbairn
Robert Fernando
Brigitte Floyd
Brian Fogarty

& Staff

Kevin Furman
Kathryn Gaines
Susan Gaines
Paul Gallivan
Robert Gardner
Matthew Garner
William Garner
Zella Garron

Gregory Geimer
Sara Gleason
Amy Govert
Marybeth Gregor
Juan Guajardo
Linda Hall
Teresa Harness
Josh Harvoth

Bridney Hayes
Susan Hayes
Kira Healy
Robert Heckler
Dave Hinkel
Anthony Hofer
Yolanda Hogan-Morris
Gina Holloman

Cari Hooper
David Hossler
Jason Hostetler
Sean Hudson
Joseph Hussey
Elisha Israel
Cynthia Jacox
Timothy James

Darcie Johnston
James Johnston Jr.
Kimberly Joiner
Kathy Jones
Betty Jordan
Joseph Jurisa
Nicki Jusko
Andrew Kaplar

Rose Karson
Sean Kavois
Jason Kendera
Sarah Kennedy-Ketchem
Elizabeth Kenyon
Mark Keyes
Sean Kinsey
Lena Kiser

Debra Klippel
Andjelija Knezevic
Michael Knocke
Nada Kolar
Kelly Kratz
Themelina Kritikos
Michael Krutz
Linda Kulina

Danny Lackey
Jeffrey Lang
Katie Lewis
Jesse Long
Aaron Longacre
Latonya Lopez
Luis Lopez
Rae Lopez

Tricia Lukawski
Thomas Mackey III
David Maldonado
Raquel Maldonado
Veronica Maldonado
Chyamiah Martin
Brenda Martinez
Rachelle Massacavollo

Nicole McDonald
Pattie McGhee
Sean Meagher
Lee Meyer
Nisa Milosavljevich
Alan Mizimakoski
Noura Mohamed
Joseph Monahan

Debra Monix
Robert Moran Jr.
Helen Moravskij
Debbie Morgan
LaFonda Morris
Dan Moslander
Erin Mulloy-Flores
Kristina Musielak

Mary Neylon
Gail Nicolini
Bonnie Niksch
Kawana Noland
Joe Nora
Elizabeth O`Halek
Martha Ortiz
Rick Parker

Stacy Parkhurst
Penny Parmley
William Parnell
Brian Past
Deanne Pierce
Marsha Pierson
Heather Pocock
Celia Pollard

Steven Prather
Terry Pratt
Teresa Procter
Rose Pulliam
Janis Qualizza
Guy Ramey
Shelley Ray
Kari Regan

Melinda Reinhart
Leilani Reiser
Ruben Reyes
Judy Riba
Christopher Richardson
Marcus Robinson
Patricia Robison
Glenda Rodriguez

Susan Rosenwinkel
Valetta Ross
Sharon Row
Joshua Sabinas
Jamerson San Antonio
Brenda Sanders
Chicha Sanders
Sherri Scartozzi

Mark Schellinger
Gary Schlinger
Sandra Scholtens
Daniel Schoon
Pamela Schuetz
Sandra Scott
Marica Sekuloska
Charles Seligman

Melissa Sickinger
Veronica Siwy
Alison Skertic
Mitchell Smith
Patricia Smith
Patricia Smith
Jason Sonnenberg
Rachel Sonnenberg

Irene Spiro
Dawnell Spriggs
Samantha St. Aubin
Dean Stadt
Debra Staffeld
Jacob Stafford
Sara Stallings
James Stamper

Jean Stanford
Zoran Stefanovic
Michael Stills
Albert Stoner Jr.
Thomas Sweet
Melissa Szczerba
Jessie Taylor
Marnita Taylor

Tracy Taylor
David Teeter
Gale Thomas
Kurledia Thomas
Charles Tomaszewski
Carolyn Trimble
Jeffrey Trivette
Patti Tubbs

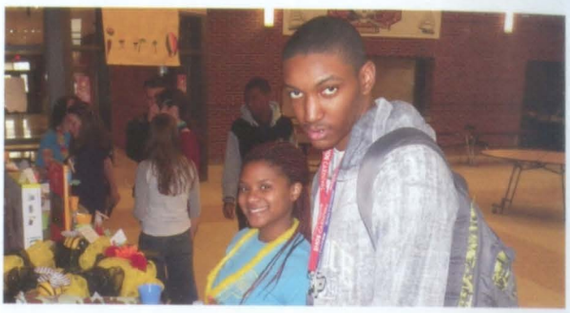
Wanda Underhill
Paul Unterfranz
Cheryl Ursery
Melissa Valsi
Beverly VanDrunen
Joy Varela
Mia Vinson
Carol VonBehren

Ronda Waters
Kerry Wiersbe
Melissa Williams
Sally Williamson
Debra Willison
Michelle Wilson
Donald Wirick
Genevieve Wirtz

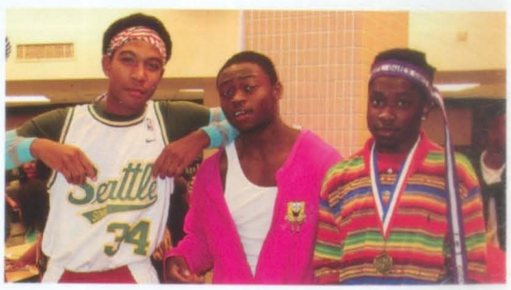
Evelyn Wofford
Daniel Wrasman
Dorothy Yetsko
Esmeralda Zamora
Brian Zdych
Joan Zerbe

Meagan Clarkson
Freshman Year Winter Formal

Andria Woodworth, Anyssa Carbajal, Araceli Hernandez, Christian Reddick and Humberto Sanchez
Freshman Year Homecoming



Ashli McNair and Kenneth Moore
Sophomore Year Key Club Carnival



Dwayne Fitzpatrick, Anthony Green and Daiyon Bryant
Sophomore Year Wacky Tacky Day

Senior Street

Michael Johnson II
Junior Year
Grand March

Jenna Jurczyk, Jaz Talley and Keristen Lucero
Junior Year Crowning Prom Queen at Grand March

Sydney Tucker, Ramone Atkins Frazier and Cynequa Cross
Senior Year Baccaleureate

Superintendent Dr. Anthony Lux and Alysha Holley
Graduation

Four years ago, we started this high school journey. Think back to the first day of freshman year. It feels as long ago as first grade.

High school years, despite what you may think right now, can be the best years of your life.

You learn everything you need to know, although it may not have been taught in the classroom.

You learned what it is like to feel heartbroken or what it is like to feel what you may call love.

You learned who your friends really are and who was just there for the popularity.

You may have even learned that not everyone was your friend.

You learned that people come and go, whether you were ready for them to leave or not.

You learned how to deal with a variety of personalities unlike yours, despite the conflicts they brought with them.

Within the classroom, though, you learned that deadlines are deadlines and planning is key, even though you may still procrastinate once you move on.

By senior year a lot has changed, from physical appearances to your mental state.

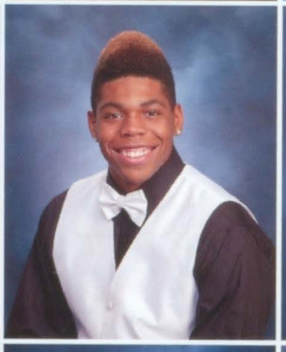
Most people are worried about popularity and fitting in freshman year.

By senior year, you start to realize that your real journey is about to begin and you start to focus on your life ahead.

Almanoemi Acosta
Emmanuel Agbana
Kayla Akujobi
Maryam Ali

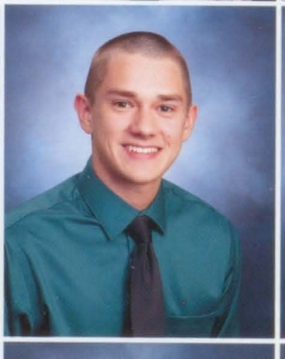
Ayana Allen
Diamond Allen
Dustin Allen
Johnathon Arce

Payton Ash
Da'Ja'Nay Askew
Ramone Atkins Frazier
Jamerra Bailey



Jordan Baldwin
Dorian Balensiefen
William Ballard
Damen Banks Jr.

Lauren Banks
Alexis Barron
Anthony Bass
Cynthia Basu-Chavez



Ebony Beasley
Julian Bell
Ashley Benkert
Faith Bonner

McKinley Boone
Jannel Boyd
Cameron Bracey
Bradley Brack

Sarah Bradash
Victoria Bradley
Ralaunda Bradshaw
Ryan Brady

Kora Bramson
Alyssia Broaders
Kayla Brock
Cameron Brooks

Dominique Brown
Jamie Brown
Alonzo Brown III
Micah Burgstahler

DeShawn Burl
Kalynn Butler
Thomas Butler Jr.
Crystal Cabrera

Imani Campbell
Alice Canchola
Mariana Cantu
Brandon Carpenter

CLASS OF 2015

Andres Carrillo
Marcus Castro
Kayleigh Champion
Brionna Charles

Destiny Chavers
Meagan Clarkson
Kelci Coker
Brianna Cole

Dezonn Coley
Marissa Collins
Juan Contreras
Shamar Cooper

Vincent Corralez
Kaitlyn Covaciu
DeOnna Cox
Vejer Cox

Elijah Coy
Cynequa Cross
Marguerite Culbreath
Brittany Cupid

Kitali Curry
La'Neicea Dates
Dijonte Davis
Amber Dawning

Danielle DeLeon
Matthew Deloch IV
Claret Diaz
Ra'vyn Dickinson

Destiny Dixon
Todd Douglas Jr.
Jordan Downs
Antonio Drake

Robert Drayton Jr.
Mikkel Drevland
Yiqi Duan
Jenna Ducret

Jamal Duke
Daniel Eldridge
A'Mauri Erving
Christian Espino

Jeremy Falaschetti
De'ja Fields
Nathan Fles
Maria Flores-Ministro

Gregory Fontanez
Serena Ford
Victoria Frey
Jennifer Gaines

Victoria Gaines
Rachel Galante
Aaron Gamble
Kiarah Gamble

Karina Garcia
Torrey Garcia
Ashlin Gibson
Charity Gilkey

Alicia Gomez
Kayla Grant
Ayana Gray
Terrance Grayson

Justin Griffin
Xeria Griffin
Emily Gronli
Mitzy Gutierrez

Ray-Quan Hampton
Denzel Harmon
Diamonique Harris
Ebony Harris

Kyara Harris
Morgan Harris
Tilaya Harris
Alexis Harris-Medina

Amy Harsma
Sidney Hawkins
Raveen Heath
Ricky Heath Jr.

Adriana Hernandez
Araceli Hernandez
Matthew Hill
Christina Hobbs

Dewrell Hobson III
Alysha Holley
Jessica Holmes
Henry Holzwarth

Jayonna Horton
Candace Howard
Brandon Hurson
Robert Jackson

Shauntielle James
Tajia James
Sharonia Jelks
Arriana Jimenez

Arrianna Johnson
Ashantae Johnson
Michael Johnson II
Michele Johnson

CLASS OF 2015

Tayler Johnson
Tyler Johnson
Jamiah Jones
Juan Juarez

Jennifer Jurcak
Jenna Jurczyk
Jagjot Kaur
Samantha Keith

Evin Kennedy
Jordan Kenner
Drew King
Khandi King

Cassidy Koontz
Ethan La Belle
Samantha Lee
Natavia Lenoir

Ashley Leon
Morgan Lesich
David Lewis
Jamese Lewis

Jayla Lewis
Katherine Light
Meranda Lipson
Donald Long Jr.

Jeffrey Long
Ernesto Lopez Jr.
Orlando Lopez
Keristen Lucero

Toriana Mabon
Shana Mabone
Armando Maldonado
Ruben Maldonado

Devin Martin
Alona Martinez
Patricia Matheny
Krystle Mathis

Colton Maynard
Brittany McDowell
Whitney McGill
Jordan McHenry

Talaria McKinley
Ashli McNair
Caddon McWilliams
KeYuana Membres

Sergio Mendoza
Andrew Merced
Oji Meux
Allyssa Mihal

DeAndrea Mitchell
Brandon Mizanin
Kwame Moffett-Knight
Jara Montgomery

Alesha Moody
Dakyla Moore
Kenneth Moore
Nigel Moore

Jayda Morgan
Andy Murga
Bianca Murphy
Isis Nash

Angelica Navarro
Steven Negrelli
Tommye Nelson
Lukas Nero

Christopher Newman
Dariah Norwood
Andres Nunez
Kennedy Nunn

Huldah Ohiani-Jegede
Charesse Parker
Asianna Peterson
Da'eJa Pinkins

Jacqueline Pollard
Sierra Porter
Malik Presley
Marissa Presley

Brandon Quanstrom
Gildardo Quintero Jr.
Alexia Rainey
Diego Ramirez

Crystal Recio
Christian Reddick
Kianna Reed
Alexandra Rich

Kamau Richardson
Camari Riley
Karl Riley Jr.
Johnnie Rivera

Jonathan Robinson
Michael Robinson
Raina Robinson
Rhonda Robinson

Surrae Robinson
Briante Rodgers
Christopher Rodriguez
David Rodriguez

Edgar Rodriguez
Joel Rosas
Kerri Rouser
Naphtalia Ruth

Christopher Saez
Rahma Safraoui
Brian Sales
Bradley Salka

Mam Samba
Arnold Sanchez
Humberto Sanchez
Khaila Sanchez

Moniel Sanders
Andres Santiago
Caitlyn Scegiel
Derek Scott

Pierre Scott
Jesse Serrano
Montriel Shell
Jazzmine Shufford

Kendall Skinner
Aaliyah Smith
Alize Smith
Brianna Smith

Brittany Smith
Quintavion Smith
Vall'ee Smith
Jordan Stanley

TiShawn Steele
Taylor Steffey
Kali Stevens
Antonia Stewart

Briah Stinson
Chloe Stone
Royce Stringer
Frank Strug Jr.

Benjamin Styx
Malika Sweeney
Jaz Talley
Miguel Tapia

Brandon Taylor
Brandon J. Taylor
Courtney Taylor
D'artagnan Taylor

Desmond Thomas
Victoria Thompson
Robin Townsend
Samantha Triplett

Tzu Ting Tseng
Jonathan Tucker
Sydney Tucker
Joseph Turley

Alexandria Turner
Anthony Turner
Marlon Turner II
Joseph Twitdy

Lela Valadez
Quanisha Vaughn
Gregory Vega Jr.
Yadhira Velez

Hope Wagonblast
Wynonna Wagonblast
Mia Wahdan
Kashay Welch

Janae West
Jazmine West
Tyler Westbrook
Aaliyah Williams

Ashley Williams
Jermisa Williams
Lawrence Williams Jr.
Rashaad Williams

Deliah Winters
Darshawn Woodard
Reesie Woods III
Andria Woodworth

Ci'erra Wright
Keon Wright
Nadia Wright
Taja Wright

Vanessa Yanez
Kierra Young

Senior class always aimed for success

The Class of 2015 hopes people will remember them for more than their senior gift.

Senior class treasurer Kayla Grant and senior class president David Lewis said that they believe that members of the Class of '15 will push towards their goals and aspirations.

"The lasting contribution from the Class of 2015 would be our leadership and passion," Grant said. "I've noticed that our class is extremely passionate about their goals and aspirations. Also our ability to lead other students will have a long lasting effect on Merrillville High School."

Lewis agreed and noted "our ability to push out MHS's motto of aiming for success."

The class won the Homecoming float contest sophomore year and placed second in the contest during their junior year. For the sophomore and junior years, the class participated in the Key Club Carnival for Kids. Classmates who played in the annual Senior-Faculty Basketball Game lost by one point, the closest any team has come to beating the faculty in many years.

English teacher Mr. Paul Unterfranz worked with the class as its senior sponsor. He said their biggest contribution has been the example that they have set for the underclassmen.

"Their ability to get along, embrace their differences and work together to maintain the standard of excellence that has been established have gone a long way to making MHS a better place," Mr. Unterfranz said.

The officers of the Class of '15 said they believe that their uniqueness and ambition are characteristics that will set them apart from other classes.

"The Class of 2015 is very determined, strong-willed and outstanding. Our generation does not let anything or anyone get in the way of achieving their goals," Grant said.

Mr. Unterfranz also commended the class officers for their dedication to their classmates.

"Everything that they did throughout the entire year was with the intention of making sure that they had the most memorable senior year possible," Mr. Unterfranz said. "Without their determination and drive, many of the events that were put on this year would not have happened."

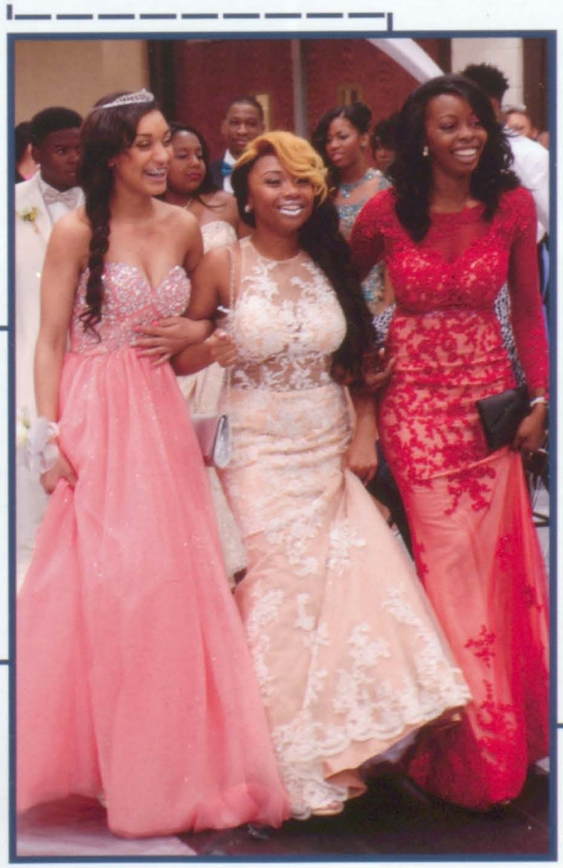
Front row: Secretary Khandi King and Vice President Kayla Grant; Back row: Treasurer Moniel Sanders President David Lewis.

Left: PNN interviews Kelci Coker and India Simpson during Homecoming Week's Twin Day. Top: Michelle Johnson poses for a shot to be in the newspaper. Top Right: Meagan Clarkson and her parents, Inez and Edward Clarkson, stand on the field as the seniors are announced for soccer's senior night. Middle Right: Starr Callicott, Jordan McHenry, Tommye Nelson, Jamiah Jones, Sabrina Harris and Talaria McKinley smile for the cameraman at the Homecoming Dance. Bottom Right: Exchange student Rahma Safraoui gets ready for an airing of the Pirate News Network.

Camera Shy

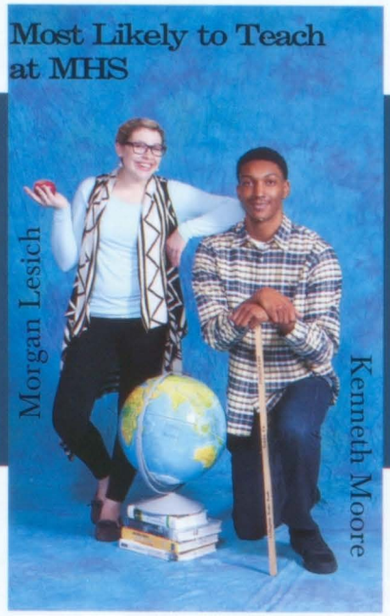
Israel Akinbobuyi
Jayson Allen
Ashley Ammons
Brittany Anaya
Justin Anderson
Julian Andrews
James Austin
Kya Bailey
Reynaldo Barajas
Nicholas Barnes
Julius Barocio
Asia Barron
Linda Basemore
Alayshia Bates-Smith
Stone Battles
Janel Baylor
Kendall Bell
Brandon Bellamy
Mark Benyoun Jr.
Romello Berry
Terica Bethel
Mitchell Brayfield
Emmanuel Briseno
Isaiah Broden
Seriah Brown
Alexander Brumfield
Daiyon Bryant
Daylen Bryant
Tiearra Buckingham
Starr Callicott
Anyssa Carbajal
Keith Carr Jr.
Destiny Carter
Na'Jvia Caruthers
Angelina Castillo
Michael Castillo J
Jakqwuan Chandler
Leniya Charles
Darwind Chism
Mario Cisneros
Myracle Coleman
Antonio Collier Jr.
Justus Collins
Tierney Cook
Tevon Cooper
Nathaniel Cox
Angelica Crawford
Anthony Davis
Malik Davis
Noah DelReal
Joleesa Doss
Bryson Draper
Jonathan Duke
George Duncan IV
Jamia Dunn
Megan Dziewicki
Tyneah Ellis
Brandon Fassoth
Anna Feliciano
Garrett Ferrell
Jessica Ferrell
Caitlin Fisher
Dwayne Fitzpatrick Jr.
Brendan Fitzsimmons
Kandia Flewellen
Khalece Ford
Andrew Foster III
Derrick Frazier Jr.
Sheshawna Fulton
Xayvion Gantt
Alonzo Garcia
Reese Gibs
Eriss Gillian
Aliyah Glover
Felipe Godinez
Austin Goldsmith
Anthony Green Jr.
Sandra Gresham
Daron Griffin Jr.
Alexander Griffith
Luis Gutierrez
Eein Harmon
Mikayla Harmon
Darryl Harris
Montrell Harris-Jackson
Xandria Harrison
Donny Harvey
Ayodeji Hassan
D'Monique Hayes
Cantrell Henderson
Carolina Henderson
Vondell Henry Jr.
Elizabeth Hernandez
Jeremy Herrod
Monica Hicks
Daniel Holden
Imari Howard
Bryceton Irvin
Jamal Ivey
Lashonda Ivy
Ivan Jara
Sierra Jeffries
Julian Jenkins
Roberto Jeronimo
Anietra Johnson
Clarence Johnson III
Daijon Johnson
Kenneth Johnson I
Timothy Johnson Jr.
Justin Johnson
Tyresa Johnson
Dorian Jones
Jerimiah Jones
Sacha Jones
Tyreece Jones
Leon Kallert
Mikolaj Kaszubowski
Jason King
Joshlynn King
Rebecca Koeppl
Destiny Konieczny
Julius Ledesma
Marc Lewandowski
Yesenia Lopez
Alivia Lumpkin
Terren Maclin
Dajanae Marshal
Candace Martin
Skye Martin
Abigail Martinez
Josue` Martinez-Santa
Jason Matthews Jr.
Alexis McCaine
Brandon McCallister
Dwan McDowell
Jwan McDowell
Ashua McGee
Carissa McKinney
Audie Milla
Temia Minfield
Aaron Morigi
Kenneth Morris
Amir Muhammad
Romeo Mun
Shante Neely
Ryan Neligan
Chloe Nelson
Alexis Noble
Camille Ochoa
Chloe Okemura
David Orzechowicz
Juan Padilla
Hetkumar Patel
Justin Patton
Isaiah Pearson II
Larryssa Peoples
Fernando Perez
Jairus Perry
Nicole Peterson
Ty'Ron Peterson
Tevin Phillips
James Raddatz
Maria Ramos
Zachary Reed
Juan Reyes
Kendall Rhodes
Noah Richardson
Bianca Rios
Amanda Rivera
Maryam Roberts
Day'Shoun Robinson
Marcus Robinson
Kirk Roby II
Robert Ruiz
Brandy Rzepczynski
Shana Sams
Joseph Sanchez
Victoria Sansone
Samuel Shadrick III
Austin Sh
Victoria Shelton
Ta'lar Shepard
Cory Shirk
Cristian Silva
Phillip Simmons
India Simpson
Keanu Soto
Michael Sparks Jr.
Tyler Steffey
Taylor Steverson
Jonathan Streck
Chandler Tan
Jacariay Taylor
Lubica Trenoski
Brittnay Valant
Angela Valdez
Cassandra Vargas
Sarah Varney
Brenda Velasco
Elizabeth Vinson
Darius Walker
Everett Ware III
Brittany Washington
Matthew Welzien
Adrian Williams
Arianna Williams
Jamil Williams
Jasmine Williams
Mia Williams
Cameron Wingate
Richard Witkowski
Darren Woods
Willie Woods IV
Jerrod Wright
Teonte Wright
Curtesha Young
Joseph Young

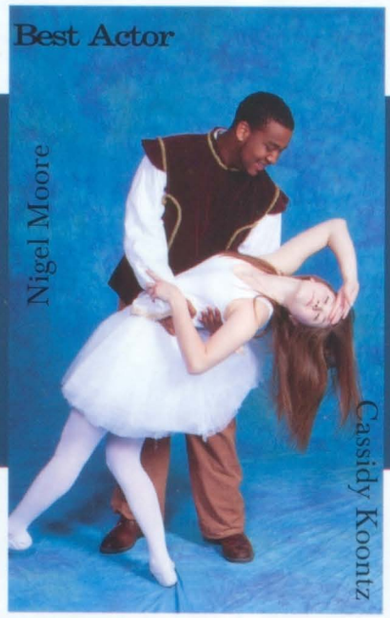
Top Left: Diamond Dancers Xeria Griffin, Charity Gilkey, Jacqueline Pollard and Jamese Lewis pose for the camera at a football game. Middle Left: Holding the poster she made to show off where she volunteered her hours, Kayla Grant poses for a picture Mrs. Melissa Sickinger is taking at the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony. Lower Left: The senior section at the Senior vs. Faculty Basketball Game watches as their peers play. Bottom Left: Sarah Varney focuses on her painting in Art Class. Bottom Right: Alyssia Broaders, Jayonna Horton and Brianna Cole walk in the Grand March before Prom. Top Right: Alice Canchola and 2014 Prom Queen, Jaz Talley, hold up their umbrella while they wait for the 2014 Homecoming Queen to be announced.



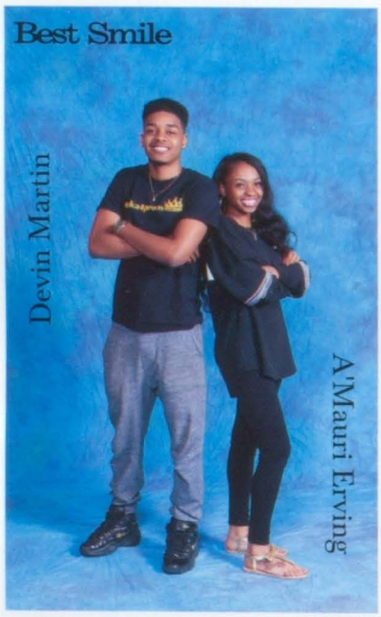
Senior Cho

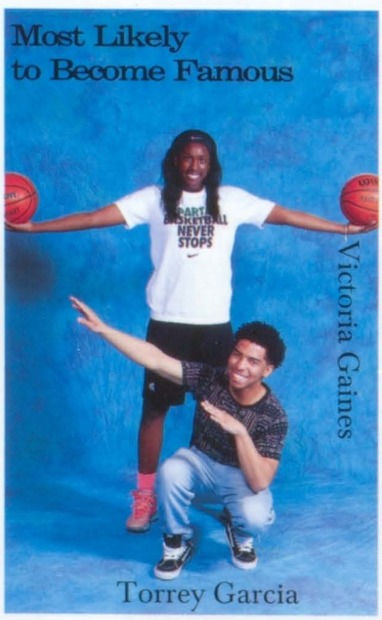
Most Popular
Sidney Hawkins
Michael Castillo

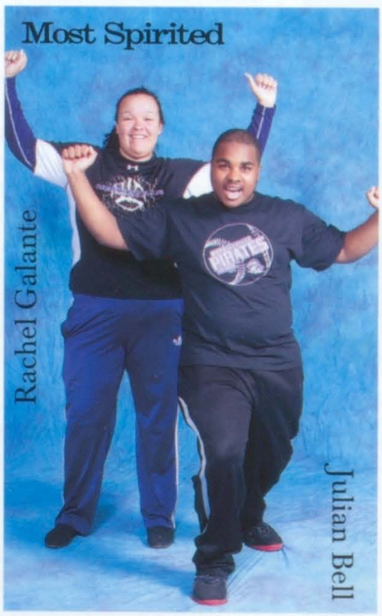

Most Likely to Teach at MHS
Morgan Lesich
Kenneth Moore

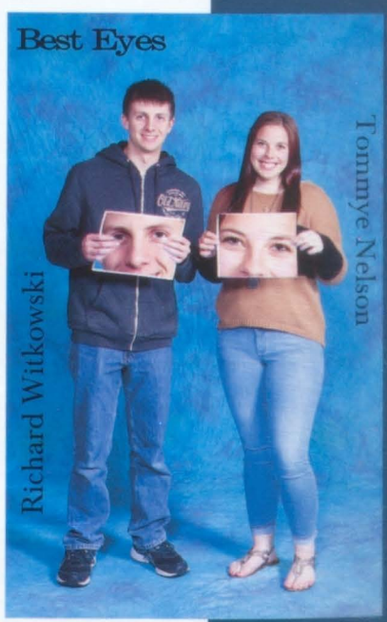

Best Actor
Nigel Moore
Cassidy Koontz

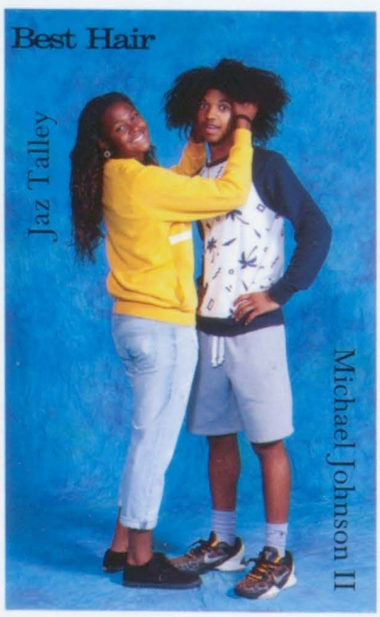
Most Actively Involved
Kayla Grant
Gregory Vega Jr.

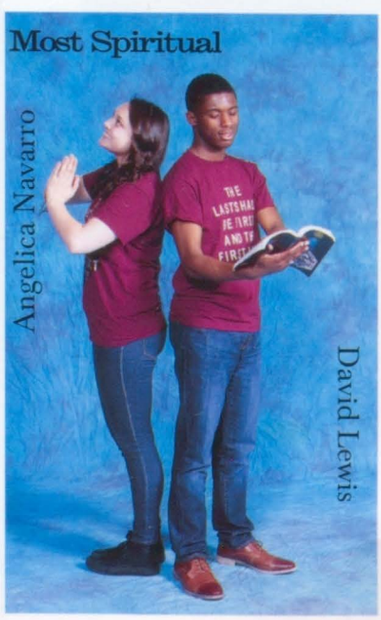

Best Smile
Devin Martin
A'Mauri Erving

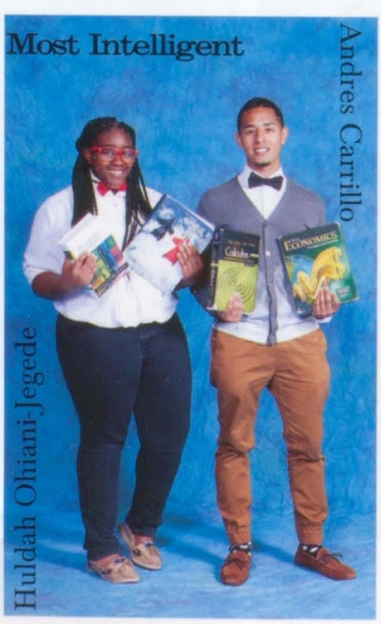

Most Likely to Become Famous
Victoria Gaines
Torrey Garcia

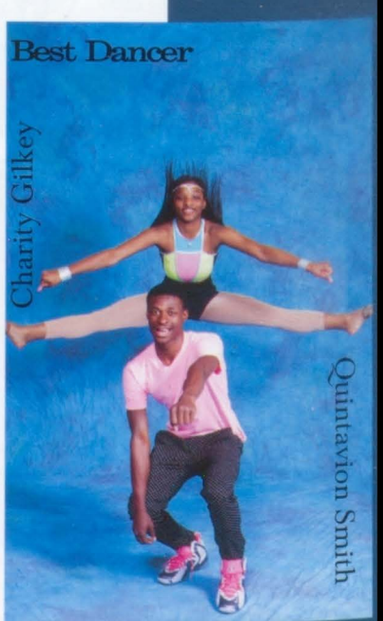

Most Spirited
Rachel Galante
Julian Bell


Best Eyes
Tommye Nelson
Richard Witkowski


Best Hair
Jaz Talley
Michael Johnson II

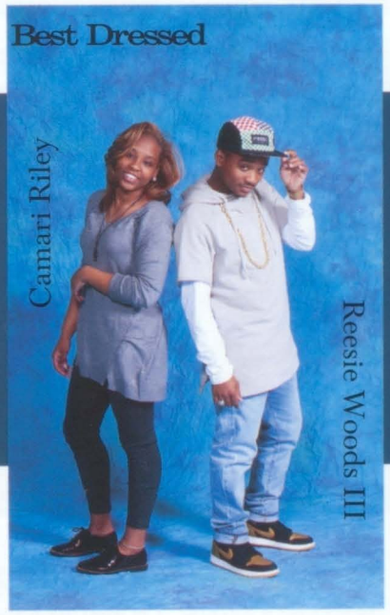

Most Spiritual
Angelica Navarro
David Lewis

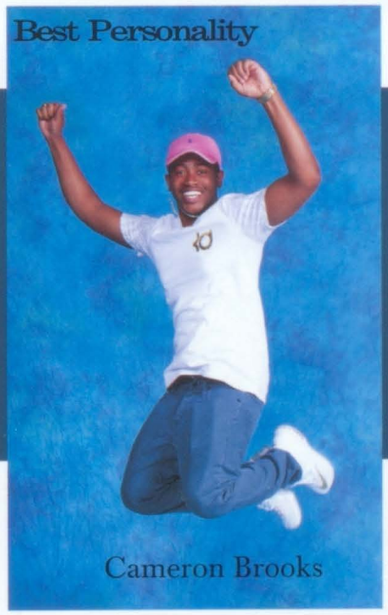

Most Intelligent
Andres Carrillo
Huldah Ohiani-Jegede

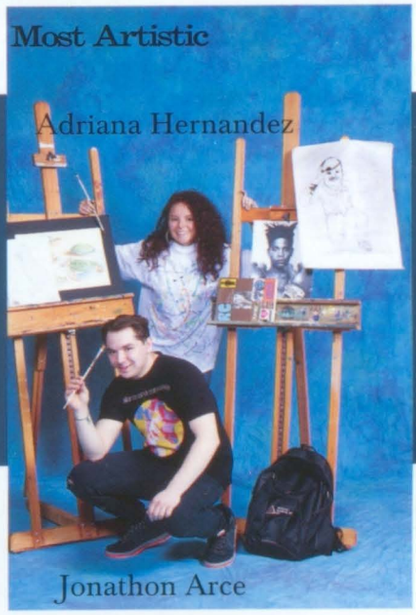

Best Dancer
Charity Gilkey
Quintavion Smith

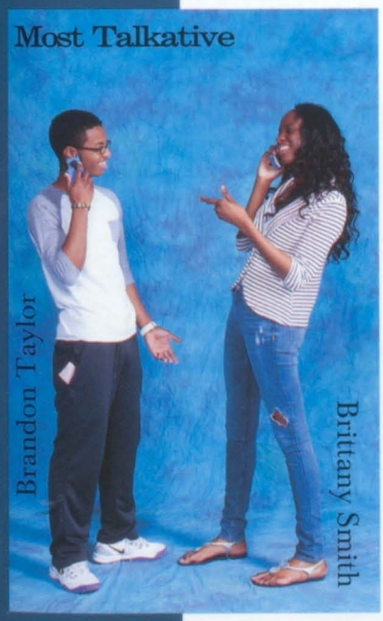
ice Awards

Best Singer
Eric Jackson Jr.
Tilaya Harris

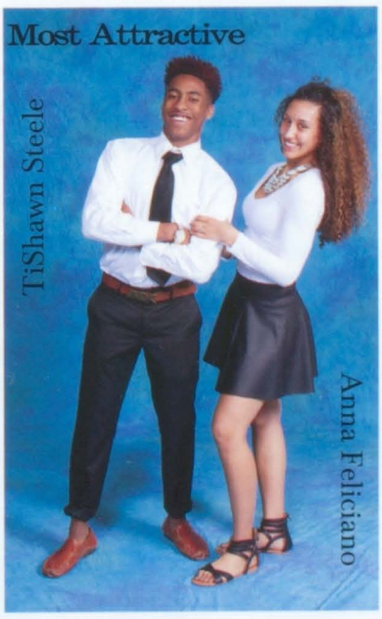

Best Dressed
Camari Riley
Reesie Woods III

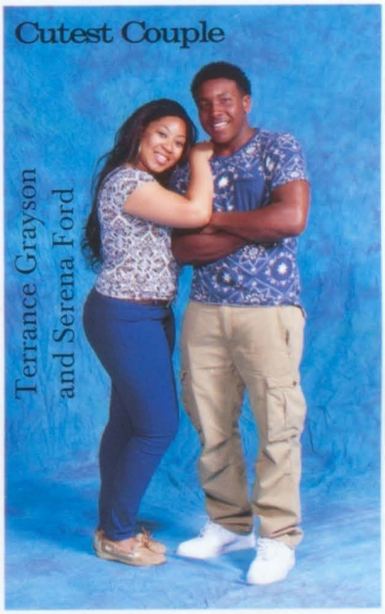

Best Personality
Cameron Brooks

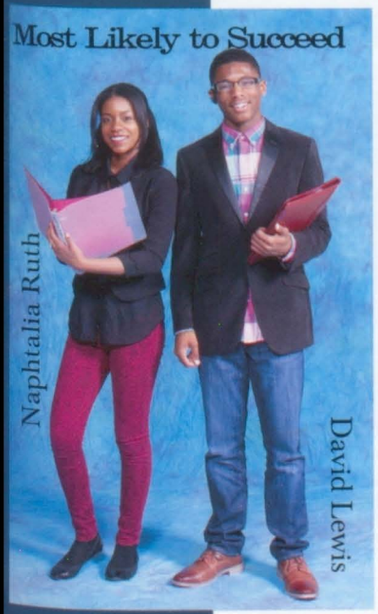

Most Artistic
Adriana Hernandez
Jonathon Arce

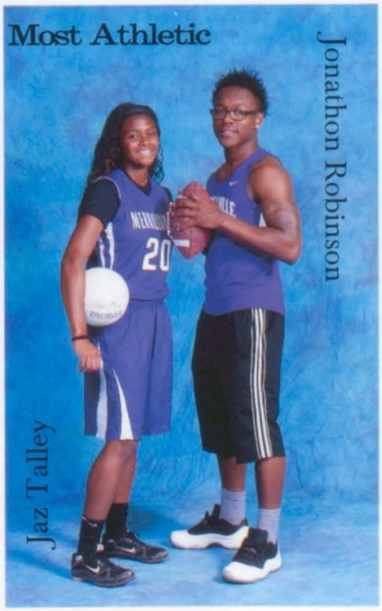

Most Talkative
Brandon Taylor
Brittany Smith

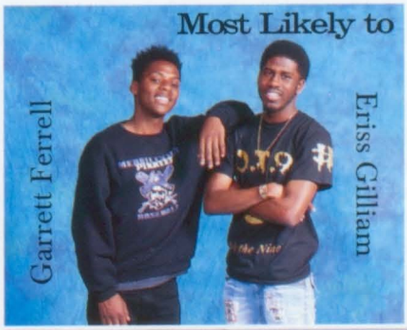
Class Clown
Seriah Brown
Julian Bell

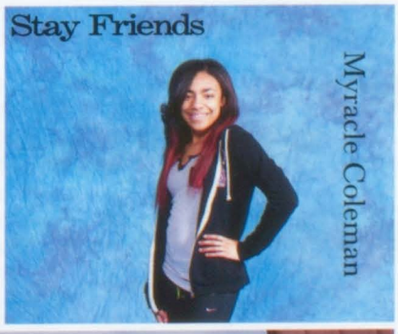

Most Attractive
TiShawn Steele
Anna Feliciano


Cutest Couple
Terrance Grayson
and Serena Ford


Most Likely to Succeed
Naphtalia Ruth
David Lewis


Most Athletic
Jonathon Robinson
Jaz Talley


Most Likely to
Garrett Ferrell
Eriss Gilliam


Stay Friends
Myracle Coleman

Best Car
Dominique Brown
Arianna Williams

Breakfast

Sitting with her friends Caitlyn Scegiel and Kali Stevens, Aaliyah Smith talks about the food. "I don't like dressing up, but will dress up on occasions," Smith said. "It was a treat to dress up for everyone."

Standing on the seat to fit the picture, Anthony Green Jr. joins his classmates to pose for a picture. "I'm honestly going to miss it and miss all my friends, but I had a good time," Green said. Green admitted it was nice to see his friends dressed up.

Q&A

How does it feel to experience the last big event with your senior class before graduation?

It feels amazing. It has been a great year.

Mikolaj Kaszubowski

It's kinda sad because a lot of us are going to college, but it's a good bonding experience.

Adriana Hernandez

It's emotional knowing this will be the last time we will all see each other.

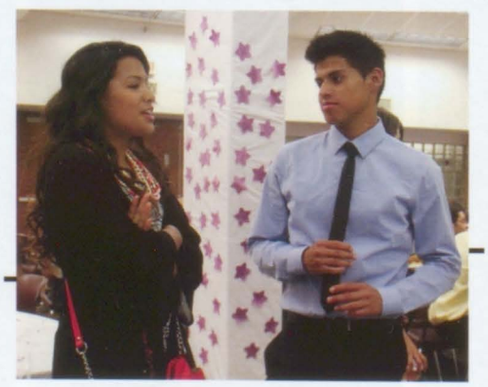
Orlando Lopez

It feels like a huge accomplishment because it is so close to the end, and we are almost done.

Araceli Hernandez

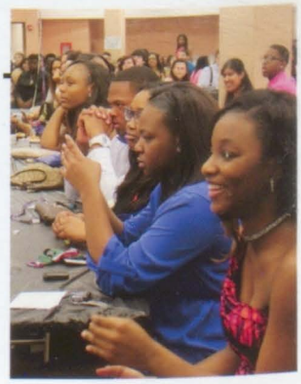
Going up to accept her award, Angelica Navarro wins Most Spiritual. "It felt like an honor because I didn't ask my classmates to vote for me, so they must have seen the characteristics in me," Navarro said.

Sitting with Clarence Johnson III and Jairus Perry, Christina Hobbs talks about the video. "Breakfast was bittersweet," Hobbs said. "I wish there were more senior activities to do." Hobbs favorite memory was being able to play in the dodgeball tournament.



Cynthia Basu-Chavez and David Rodriguez talk about how they're going to miss high school.

Eyes zoned into her phone, Senior Alexia Rainey reads her text message. "The senior breakfast was fun because I got to dress up and look nice," Rainey said.



Drive-Around

Seniors Montriel Shell and Jordan Baldwin sport their Cadillac Escalade during the Drive-Around. "It felt really good to end the year in this way," Baldwin said.

Senior Gregory Vega Jr. poses for the camera with friends as they ride in the back of a pick-up truck. "We all were super hype. The senior Drive-Around was fun," Vega said. He said after the Drive-Around, he and his friends went to the beach. "The fact that everyone was involved made it super cool," Vega said.

Q&A

What are you going to remember the most about your senior year?

Graduation, because that is the most important thing about this year.

Darshawn Woodard

I'm going to mostly remember my choir family. I've been with them for four years and my second mom, Mrs. Reinhart.

Samantha Triplett

Mostly, the trials and tribulations of making it to gradution and how much of a struggle it was.

Aaliyah Smith

Prom, because it was the first time I went, and I didn't think I'd like it, but it was a lot of fun.

Frank Strug Jr.

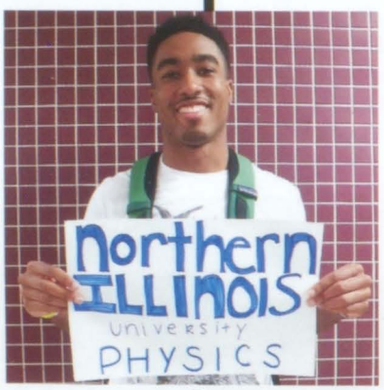
Listening to music and posing for the camera, Senior Michelle Johnson enjoys one of her last senior events. "It was great to just ride with all my best friends," Johnson said. "We all had a good time."

The only students to ride a motorcycle, Seniors Garrett Ferrell and Claret Diaz zoom around the school. "Riding a motorcycle was very interesting," Diaz said, "It was different and I enjoyed it."

Sitting on the sides of the windows, Seniors Christian Espino, Jwan McDowell, Dwan McDowell and Karina Garcia participate in the Drive-Around.

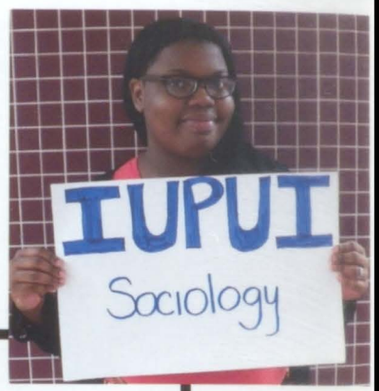
Nearing the end, Seniors Allyssa Mihal, Jennifer Jurcak, Megan Dziewicki and Meagan Clarkson wrap up the Drive-Around. "It was a fantastic experience," Mihal said, "After the Drive-Around, we all went to the beach."

Students move forward



Xavion Gantt

Shana Sams



Cameron Wingate

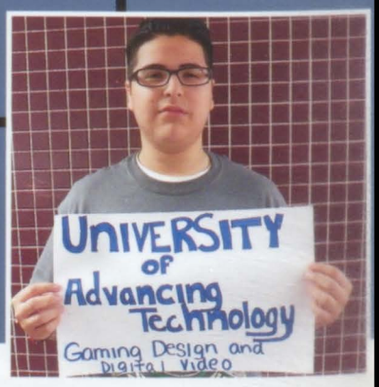
Marissa Collins

Kiarah Gamble

Morgan Lesich

Nicole Peterson

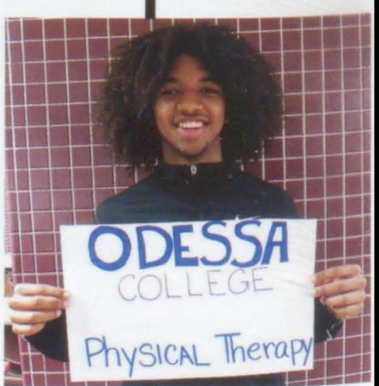
Mam Samba



Humberto Sanchez

Camari Riley

Maryam Ali



Michael Johnson II

Teachers win decathalon

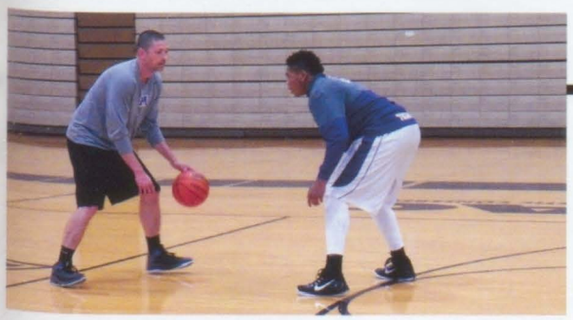
In the two-on-two basketball game against JV coach Britney Cruse and Assistant Varsity coach Brian Fogarty, Senior Victoria Gaines tries to drive past Coach Cruse. "We were out for revenge," Gaines said. "This is payback for the faculty cheating us out of our win in the Senior-Faculty Game." Gaines and her teammate Senior Ramon Atkins Frazier beat the teachers, 22-18

To get a win for the seniors, Senior Miguel Tapia tags Senior Brandon Hurson and must catch up to math teacher Mr. Wade Boise. "I was thinking about how to overlap him and that I have to win this," Tapia said. Tapia overlapped Boise three times in the win for seniors.

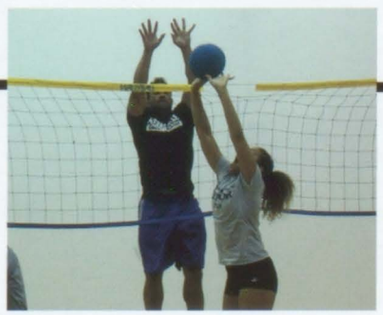
Faculty	Students
Dodgeball	Home Run Derby
Wallyball	Tennis
Hot Wings	Basketball
Bowling	Triathalon
Bags	
Penalty Kicks	

6-4

Sitting next to business teacher Mrs. Sharon Row, Senior Megan Clarkson fans her mouth in order to bring down the heat from the hot wings. "The hot wings were hotter this year than in previous years. They were blazing in my mouth," Clarkson said. Clarkson lost to six-time champion Mrs. Row.



With eyes on his opponent, Senior Ramone Atkins Frazier tries to figure out varsity coach Brian Fogarty's next move. After taking home the win, Atkins said he was glad to participate. "It was a good experience for my senior year," Atkins said.



Setting up her partner to hit the ball, Senior Morgan Harris struggles to keep the ball on her side and off the net as Mr. Patrick Coffey attempts to block. "I was scared because I though Coffey was going to block me," Harris said.

As Senior Gregory Vega Jr. competes against Mr. Josh Harvoth, he said he was thinking how to win in the close competition. "I had to remember my techniques from swim season to better my chances of winning," Vega said. Vega won the competition against Mr. Harvoth.

Dodgeball

With her eyes focused on the game, Senior Xeria Griffin stands with her team, consisting of Seniors Taylor Steffey, Da'Ja'Nay Askew, Charity Gilkey, Jacqueline Pollard and Alesha Moody. "It was a fun experience to take part in for my senior year," Griffin said.

After facing his friends' team, Senior Brandon J. Taylor walks over to congratulate them on their win. "Being able to have fun with my friends was exciting," Taylor said. He said that Rob n' the Ballers was the team's toughest competition.

No competition for the Money Team

From raising money in the Penny Wars to creating a competitive team, this year's seniors hoped to knock out their classmates and advance to play the teachers during halftime at the Senior-Faculty Game.

"We knew we were going to advance. It was easy," Senior Devin Martin said.

The Money Team of Martin, Desmond Thomas, Terrance Grayson, Reese Gibson, Dwayne Fitzpatrick and Jonathan Robinson were able to jump these hurdles and defeat their classmates to move on to play the teachers in the final round.

"We chose our team based off who was good at what and what everyone's abilities were," Thomas said.

This strategy was enough to defeat the students, but when it came to beating the teachers, The Money Team fell short.

In a game where most thought the athleticism of the students would carry them to victory, the teachers ended up winning the game. Almost everyone on the team is in at least one sport.

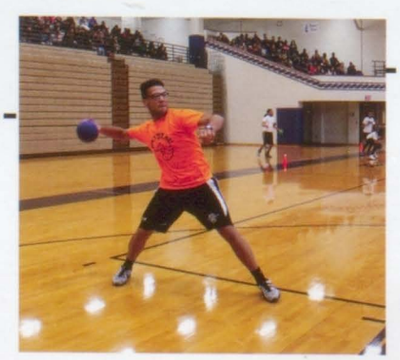
"We had good throwers and everyone is athletic," Senior Dwayne Fitzpatrick said.

The team even consisted of a baseball player, assuring a clean sweep against the teachers.

But despite these advantages, the teachers still beat the students.

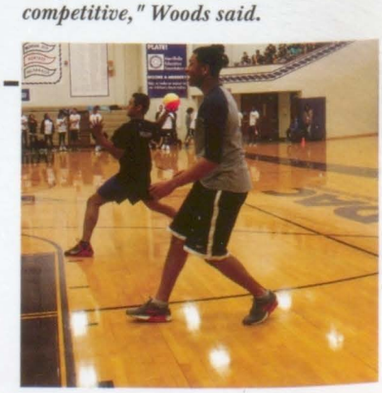
"Overall, I'm happy we still made it to the final round against the teachers," Thomas said. "It was a good game."

With a smile on his face, Senior Reese Gibson celebrates his team's win. "It was really fun knowing our team won, especially since it's senior year," Gibson said.



As his arm is moving forward, Senior Jairus Perry gets ready to throw the ball at his opponent. "Even though our team did not win, it was still an enjoyable experiene with my friends," Perry said.

While getting ready to strike, Senior Antonio Collier aims for the opponent. "The first round of the game was very competitive; however, the second round wasn't," Collier said.



Eyes on the opponent, Senior Willie Woods IV gets in a throwing position. "Even though our team could have worked more together, the game was still very competitive," Woods said.

Basketball

Before the start of the game, faculty members Mr. Thomas Mackey, Mr. Colin Elliott, Mr. Andrew Kaplar, Mr. Mike Stills and Mrs. Kelly Kratz stand for their introduction. Because most teachers either played high school or college basketball, Mrs. Kratz said their basketball knowledge and experience helped them beat the seniors. "Everyone playing was really pumped up for the game," Mrs. Kratz said. "It's really exciting to play in front of the whole school and compete with the students." Mr. Michael Knocke organized several open gym sessions and made sure the faculty came to prepare for the competition.

As he pumps up his fellow teammates, Senior Jeremy Herrod is ready to play. He said he felt his team did well and is happy with the outcome of the game. "We were close," Herrod said. "We only lost by one point." One of his most memorable moments from the game was when he dislocated his knee coming down from a lay-up. He decided to play because he wanted to leave his mark on the school. "I felt as if we could have made history," Herrod said.

Seniors come close, not close enough

As the end of the year approached, students awaited the annual Senior vs. Faculty Basketball Game.

After months of preparation, Senior Sponsor Mr. Paul Underfranz pulled together the event in hopes that it would be fun, set up as something to relax students before Spring Break.

"It seemed like everyone had a good time. I thought it was a good game overall. Closest in points in terms of score," Mr. Underfranz said.

Students said they believed that the Class of 2015 would be the first to beat the teachers in years.

"I had a feeling that the students were going to win because of Senior Marcus Robinson, but when the Class of 2017 comes around, the students are going to win," Sophomore Justin Nabors said.

Prior requirements were set up for senior participants to ensure that the finest teams were on the court.

"To participate, students had to attend meetings, be on pace to graduate and couldn't play a spring sport," Mr. Underfranz said.

To prepare, students and faculty pushed themselves past their limits to be at an optimum level physically.

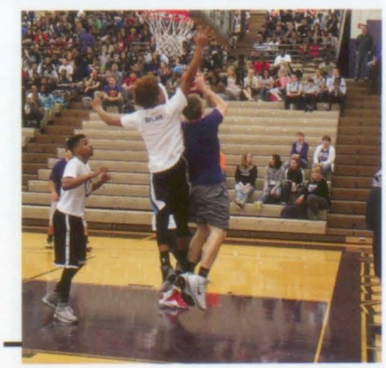
"I work out here after school three days a week. I worked the typical full-body workout – arms, chest and legs – for about 40 minutes tops," Assistant Varsity Boys' Basketball Coach Mr. Brian Fogarty said.

Although the students didn't break the faculty's 11-year winning streak, students said they appreciated the event.

"I enjoyed the game because even though the seniors lost, it was interesting how the students and faculty went back and forth scoring," Sophomore Taj Taylor said. "My favorite moment was when Marcus Robinson dunked the ball on a fast break and Mr. Fogarty hitting constant three-pointers all game."

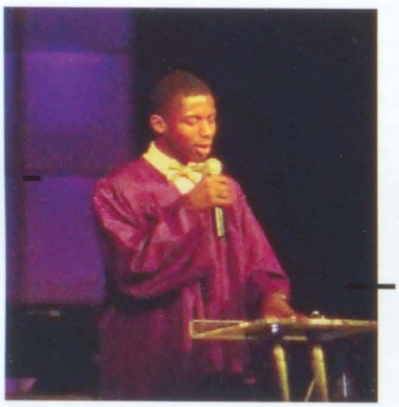
Defending against Mrs. Kelly Kratz, Senior Joseph Young tries not to be too rough. "Defending against a woman was weird. I was trying not to be too aggressive," Young said.

Trying to guard against Mr. Michael Knocke, Senior Cameron Brooks tries to keep him occupied. "I was keeping him from passing the ball to any teachers," Brooks said.



While trying to get the block, Senior Dwayne Fitzpatrick jumps up. "I felt the game was fun, a good experience and a good way to end senior year," Fitzpatrick said.

As their team is announced, Senior Coaches Victoria Gaines and Justus Collins clap their hands. "I felt as if the game went sour because we didn't get the W and that was the mission," Collins said. "We couldn't have done anything better. The staff cheated."

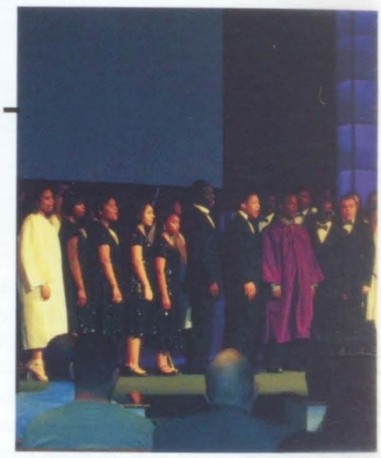


Senior David Lewis tells classmates to challenge the stereotypes of their generation. "We can flip this world upside down and prove those stereotypes about our generation wrong," Lewis said.

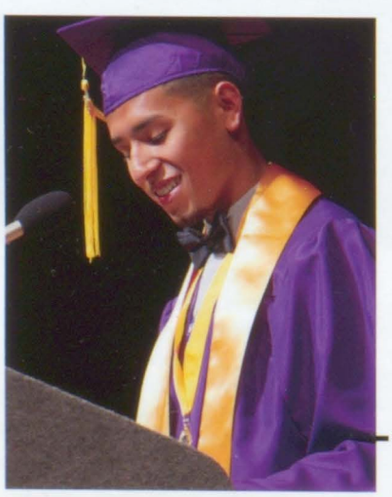
At the podium, Mrs. Patricia Robison advises seniors to move forward in their lives. "I gave advice on how to approach what may seem like a road block in their lives and how to treat people positively and with respect," Mrs. Robison said.

Senior Angelica Navarro speaks about her faith. "I was sharing my heart with my class and talked about how their faith can help them succeed," Navarro said.

The choir sings "For Good" as a final goodbye. "This was one little step toward our new beginning," Senior Quanisha Vaughn said.



Journey here has just ended



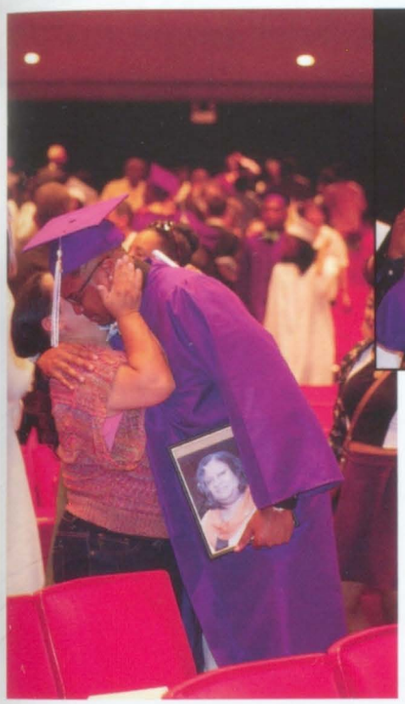
In his speech, Valedictorian Senior Andres Carrillo said, "Life is too short to live it unhappy. A simple quote that has stuck with me ever since I first heard it by Drake, the rapper, who said 'Live for today, plan for tomorrow, party tonight.' Meaning enjoy life now, prepare for what's to come, but have fun along the way."

Reciting her speech, Senior Jenna Ducret says her last words as a high school student. "Today, as we walk across this stage, we are taking the first steps toward the future, but in order to make the rest of the journey, you all must be willing to use the guidance that high school has given to you and take these steps on your own."

Standing at the podium, Senior Andrew Merced gives his speech. "We will not remember high school for the long nights of homework or the numerous tests we had to take. We will remember it for the fond memories we made and the experiences we had in the halls," Merced said. "We will never forget what we learned here; it will always be carried inside each and every one of us because it is something that is not easily forgotten."

After she gets to the podium, Senior Morgan Lesich greets the senior class. "Merrillville has given us our wings so that we can fly, and it will always be considered home," Lesich said. "You know what they say: 'Once a Pirate, always a Pirate.' There is no escaping it." Lesich is the class salutatorian. "Mr. Haddad, my eighth grade orchestra teacher, once told me we don't get to choose our names, but we do get to choose the people you become."

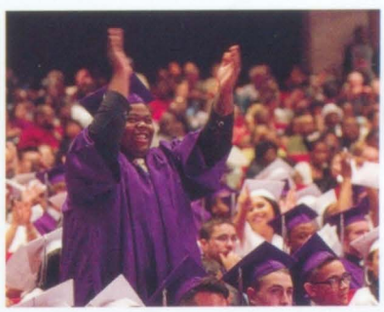
Commencement



Far left: As Jeremy Herrod holds a picture of his mother who passed away, he hugs Thomas Butler's mother.

Left: At the end, Emmanuel Agbana, Israel Akinbobuyi, Kayla Akujobi and Maryam Ali turn their tassles to the left to symbolize their graduation.

Bottom Left: Getting ready to walk across the stage, Crystal Cabrera gets help fixing her cap.

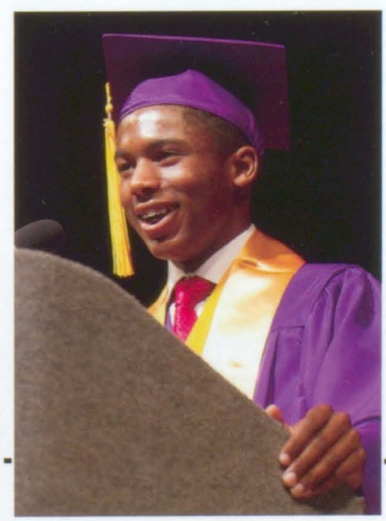


Clapping with excitement, Denzel Harmon stands up.

and our lives can now begin

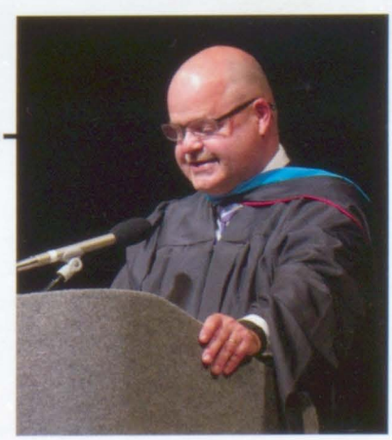
On behalf of the School Board of Trustees, President Mr. Mark Lucas accepts the class gift from Treasurer Kayla Grant. The class gift is a fountain. "There is a memory garden to celebrate the lives of staff who have passed. However this garden is often overlooked," Grant said "The Class of 2015 would like to place a fountain in the garden to symbolize the overflowing care, time and dedication those staff members have put towards the students."

The featured speaker for the Class of 2015, English teacher Mrs. Melissa Sickinger smiles at the crowd. "The 2014 - 2015 school year was my first as a fulltime teacher and fulltime mom," Mrs. Sickinger said. "I truly thought seniors saw me differently this year, but maybe it wasn't them who saw me; it was me who saw them."



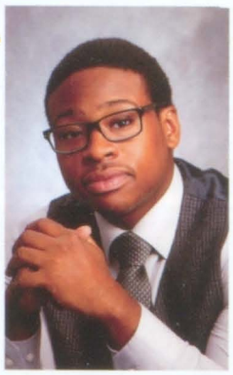
"Football games, Prom, Spirit Week and senior pranks were common events that occurred during our high school years, and whether we believe it or not, this Merrillville pride is a part of our identities," Class president Senior David Lewis said. Lewis served as the class president since freshman year.

"You have been taught way beyond the boundaries of course outlines and graduation requirements. What you have experienced is what we like to call the 'Merrillville Advantage.' Your experiences from MHS have prepared you well for the next steps of your lives. Don't be afraid to take that next step. You have secured the foundation for success over these past four years," Principal Mr. Michael Krutz said.



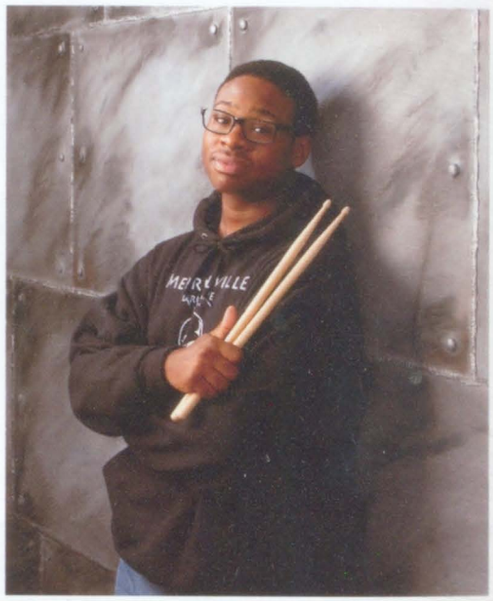
Kerri C. Rouser

Congratulations!



Joseph Twitdy

Congratulations.
Job well done. We are proud of you. We wish you continued success as you move forward in life.



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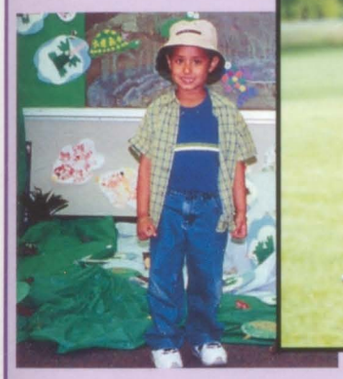
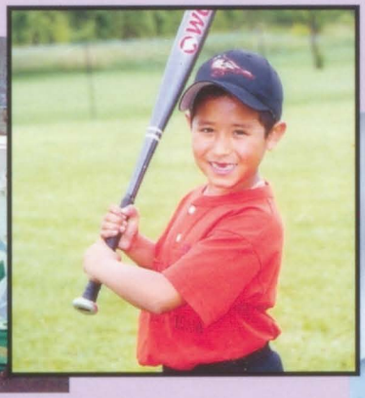
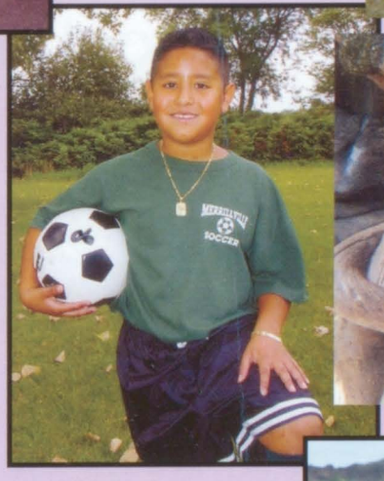
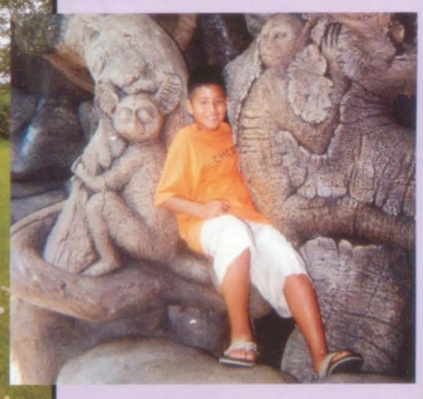



To our Valedictorian,

One of the greatest days in everyone's life is the day we were born; another is the day that we find our purpose in life.

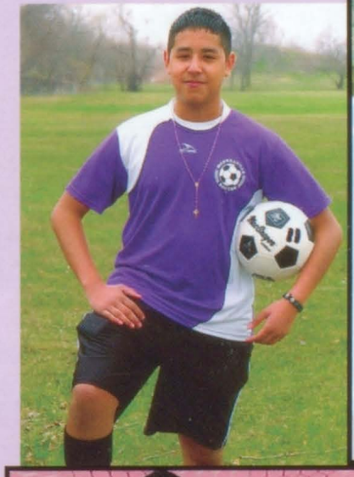
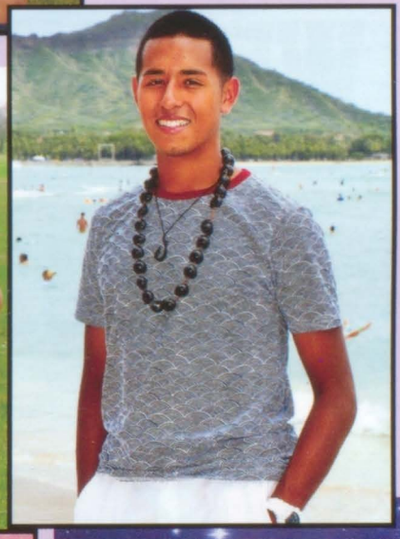
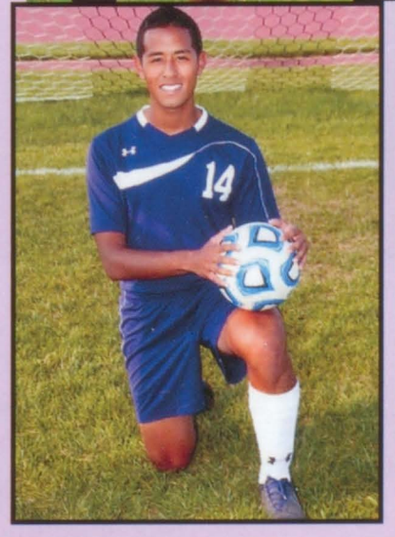
As your parents, we recognized our purpose in life that marvelous day that you were born, and throughout your life, we dedicated ourselves to instilling a righteous belief in you because we knew you were special.

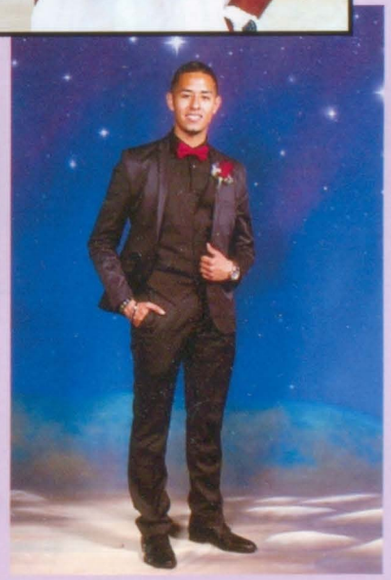
Andres, you are an exemplary son, and although you have grown up too fast, you have grown up to be a better person than we have ever imagined.

Thank you, son, for fulfilling our dream. No matter where your new ventures take you, always remember that Mami and Papi will always be waiting.

Love,

Mami y Papi



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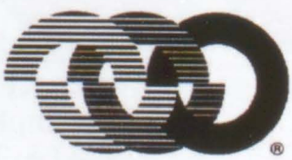

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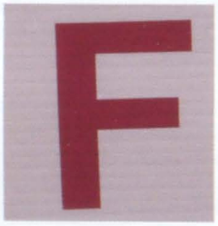

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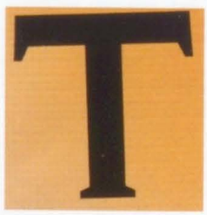

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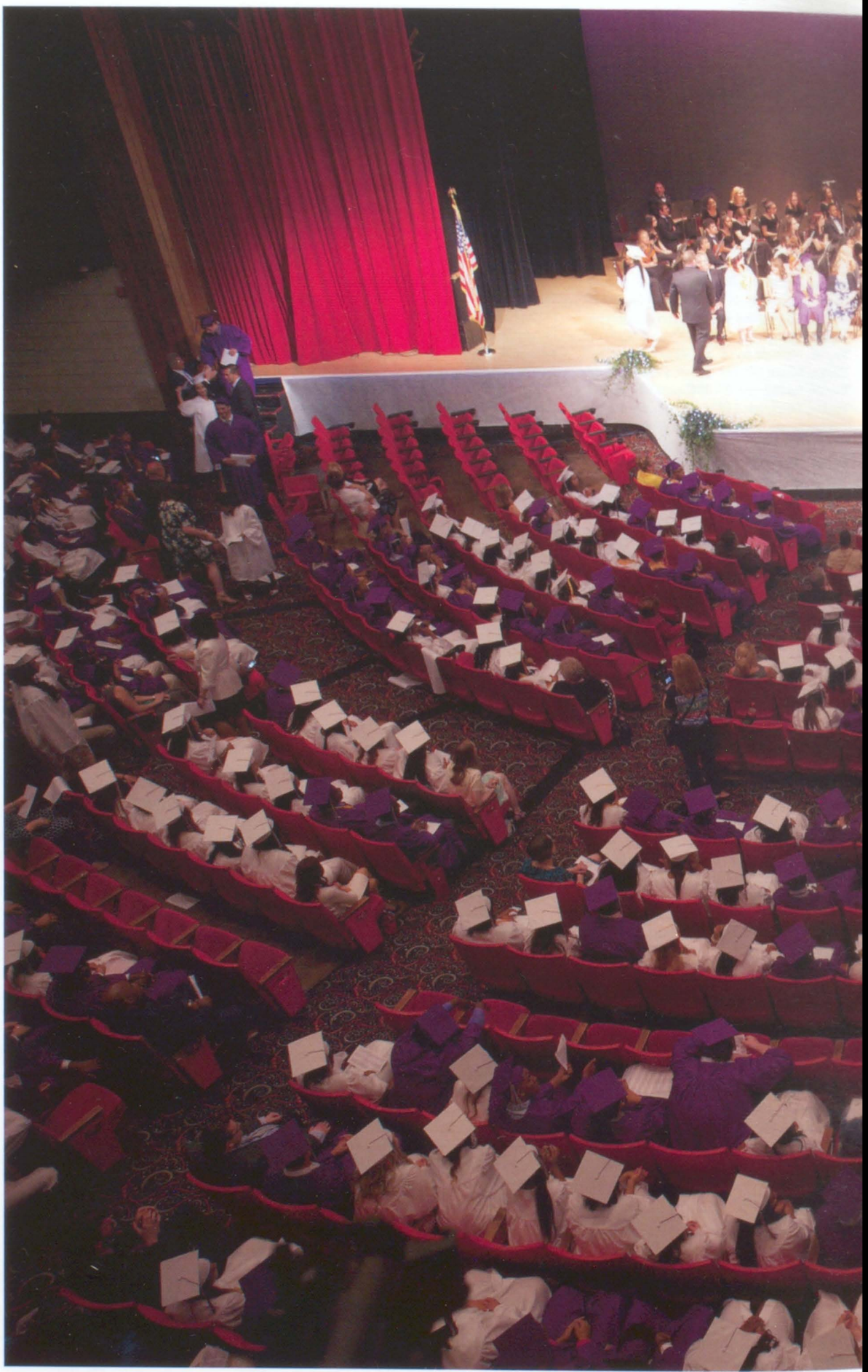
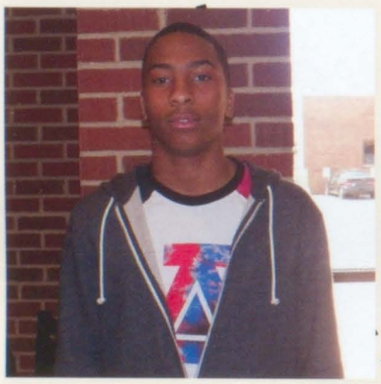


Graduation at the Star Plaza Theatre June 3 marks the end of a four-year journey for members of the Class of 2015. In the two and a half hour ceremony, 475 graduates walked across the stage. Opening the ceremony were the Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp Color Guard, who posted the colors, and senior choir members who sang the National Anthem. Members of the orchestra played before the ceremony and as the graduates entered the arena. After speeches by three valedictorians, a salutatorian and guest speaker Mrs. Melissa Sickinger, guidance counselors read the names of the graduates and Interim Superintendent Dr. Anthony Lux presented them with a diploma cover. Graduates returned to school June 4 and 5 to finish final exams after snow days forced the extension of the school calendar beyond June 3. They also returned to school after June 24 to pick up their diplomas.

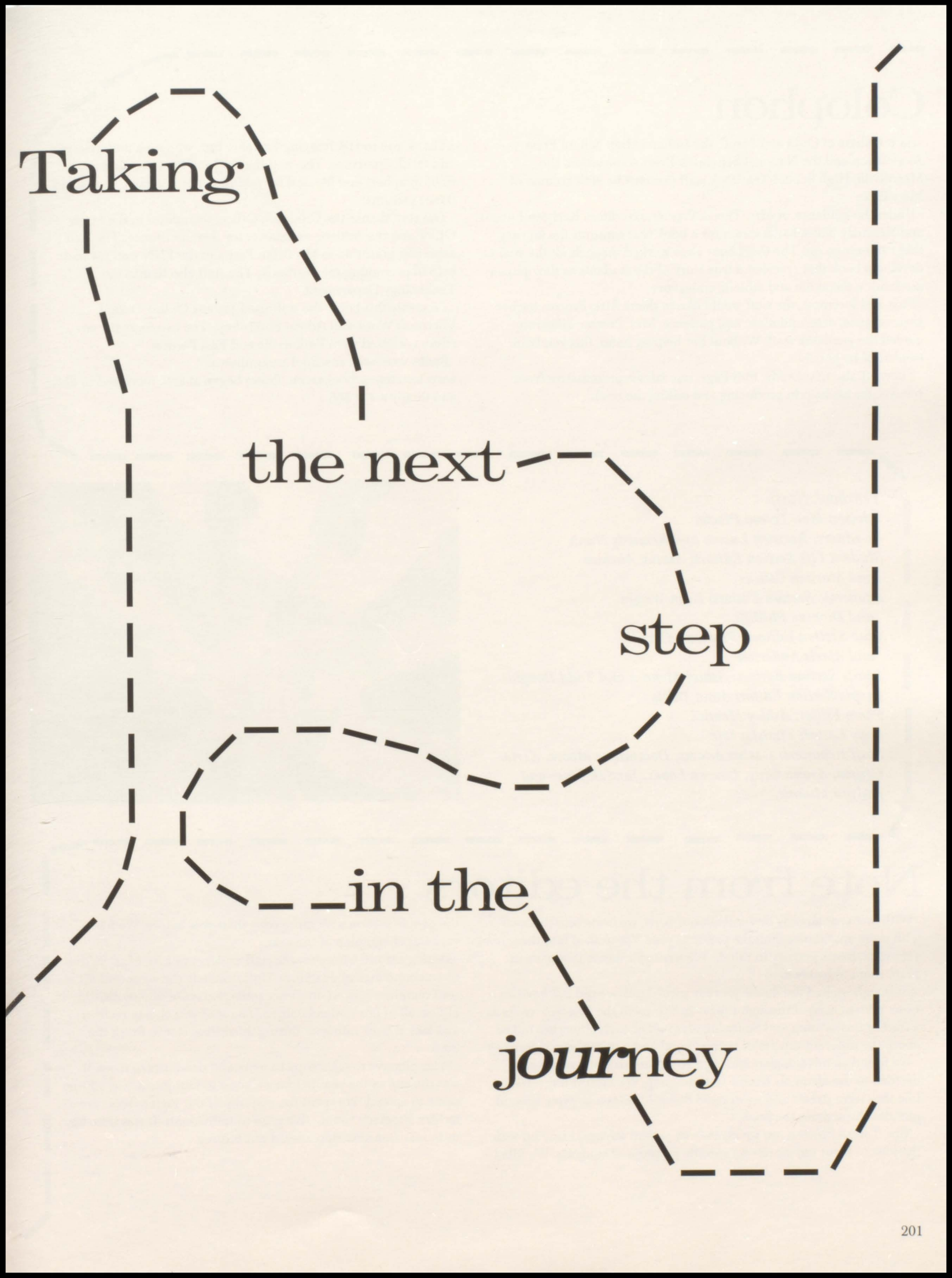
"I'm looking forward to getting a step closer to senior year."
Sophomore
Amiya Reina

"I'm going to focus on my grades, apply to colleges and have a good senior year."
Junior
Jomaria Burns



"I'm looking forward to basketball season."
Freshman
Syrrus Nunn

"I'm excited for summer fun. I'm looking forward to staying in a dorm with my friend at Purdue Calumet."
Senior
Alexis McCaine


Taking
the next
step
in the
journey

Colophon

As members of Quill and Scroll, the Indiana High School Press Association and the National Scholastic Press Association, the Merrillville High School Yearbook staff presents its 90th volume of Merrillvue.

Under the guidance of Mrs. Teresa Procter, co-editors Keristen Lucero and Kennedy Nunn had a vision for a book that captures the journey that students go on. The third hour class worked throughout the year to develop a book that revealed a true story of the students as they pursue academics, social life and athletic endeavors.

First and foremost, the staff would like to thank Mrs. Procter for her perseverance, determination, and patience. Mrs. Procter diligently guided the yearbook staff. Without her helping hand, this yearbook would not be possible.

The staff also thanks Mr. Phil Page, our sales representative from Jostens, for his help in producing and selling the book.

Thank you to HR Imaging Partners Inc., who took underclasss and faculty portraits. The staff thanks John Bir from Giolas Photographers and his staff for taking senior portraits, sports and dance pictures.

The staff thanks the Guidance Office, secretaries in the Main Office and the Athletic secretaries for their assistance. The staff expresses gratitude to Mr. Brian Past and the PNN staff for their help in promoting the yearbook. The staff also thanks the Technology Department.

To create this book, the staff used Jostens Online Design, Microsoft Word and Adobe Photoshop. The two fonts the co-editors selected were Baskerville and Fast Pardon.

Books were sold at school and online at www.jostensyearbooks.com. Prices began at $60, increased to $65, and finally set at $68.

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Note from the editors

With one year already underneath our belts, we came into this year with more confidence than the previous year. We walked into the school year with theme journey in mind. We wanted a theme that gave us more room to be creative.

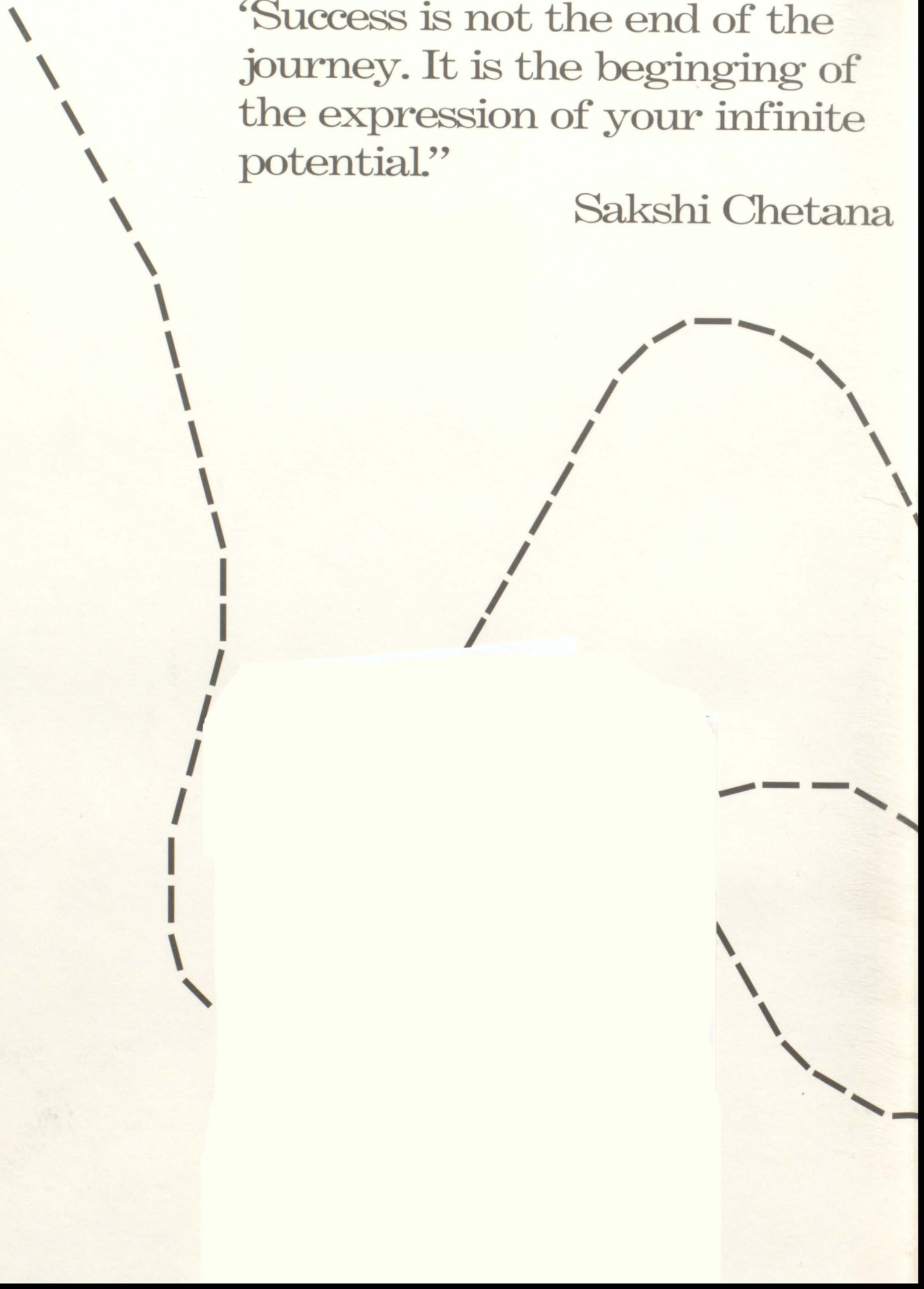
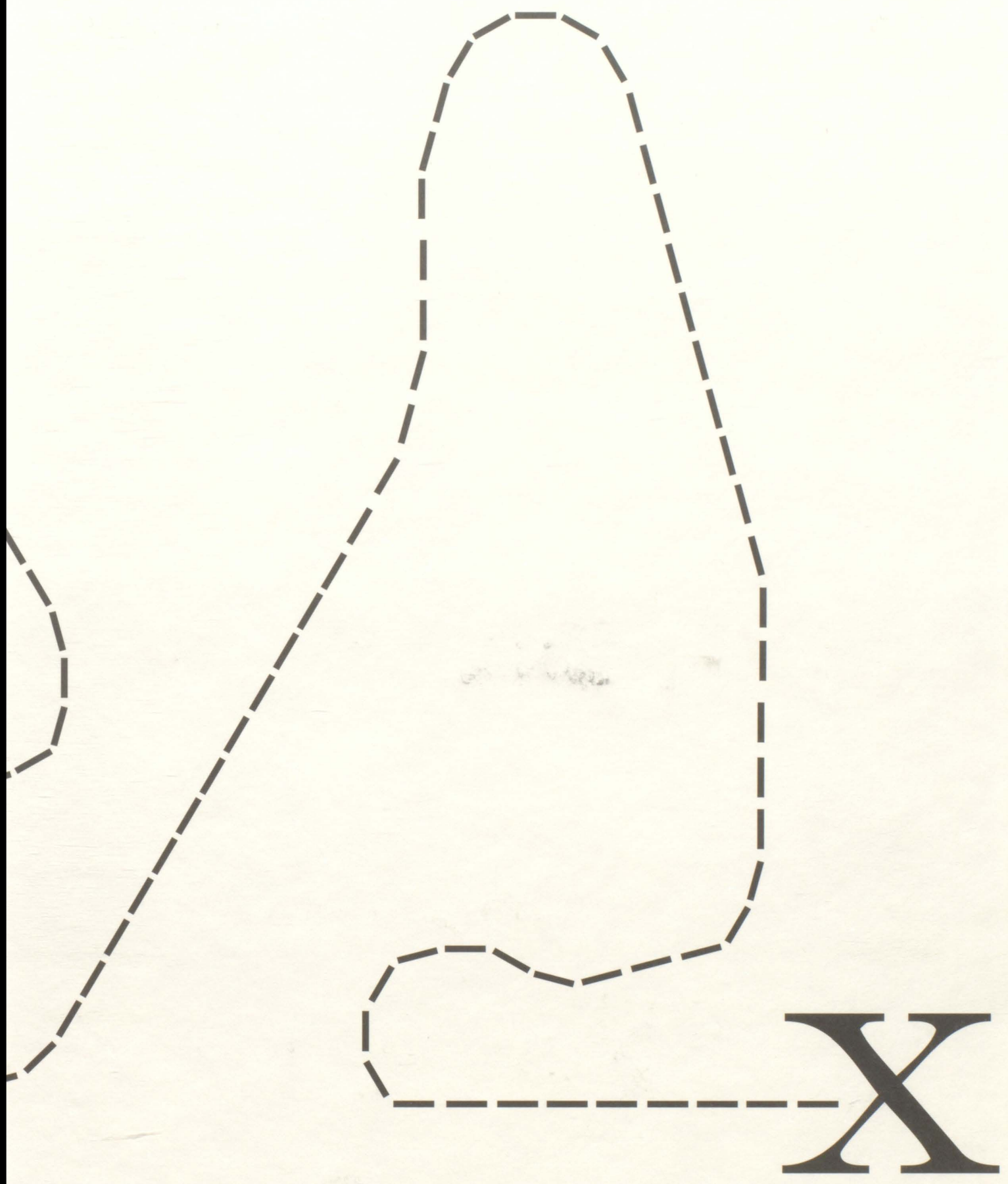
Although we had the theme journey picked out, we did not have an exact plan to carry it through the book. We spent the first two weeks as a staff brainstorming and bouncing ideas off of each other. We talked about the different aspects of both a literal and a metaphorical journey.

We found an advantage in having a school mascot of a pirate and decided to use elements from a treasure map. We named our sections like they were streets and we created Polaroid frames to place around pictures throughout the book.

Mrs. Teresa Procter, our lovely ever so patient adviser, came up with the idea to focus our stories on specific journeys of students. We filled the people section with more copy than ever before. We had a very busy beginning of the year.

During second trimester, the staff underwent a lot of stress due to an abundance of deadlines. Unfortunately the eight senior staff members passed on a very contagious case of senioritis to almost all of our underclassmen. The staff was able to recover and kick it back into gear during third trimester to finish the book.

With pictures to take, copy to write and deadlines to meet, it was the end of the year before we knew it. Our journey as editors came to an end. We spent the majority of our high school careers in Mrs. Procter's room. We grew as individuals. It was time for us to take our next step toward our futures.

"Success is not the end of the journey. It is the beginging of the expression of your infinite potential."

Sakshi Chetana